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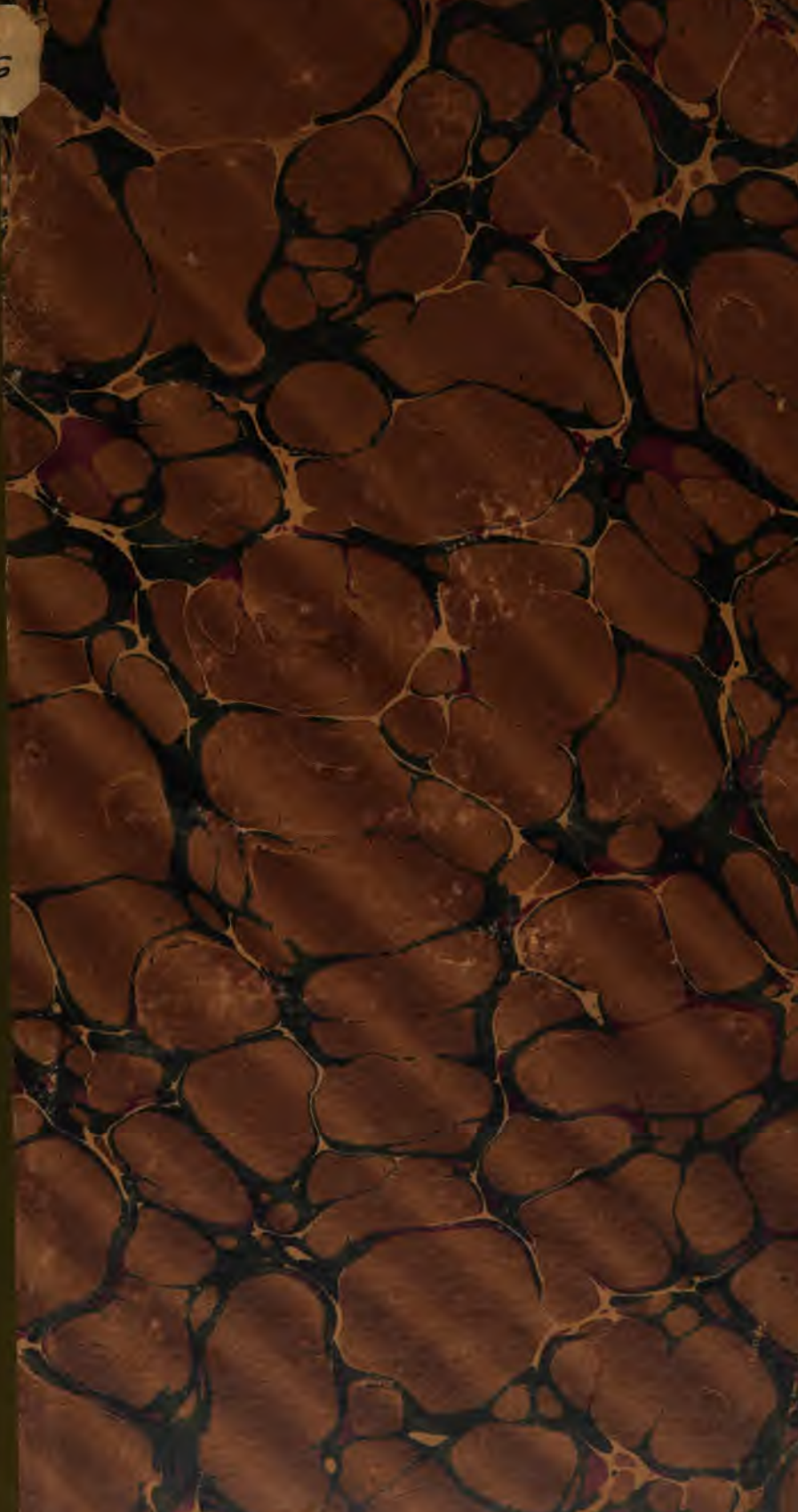
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Summary of the Proceedings of the Conference

Correspondence-Study Department
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION DIVISION
The University of Wisconsin

**INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY
OF
UNITED STATES HISTORY**

BY
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This *Introduction to the Study of United States History* was prepared by Professor Fish at the request of the Extension Division to meet the needs of correspondence students. It is intended to furnish the background of information essential for the intelligent appreciation of national development, and in some degree to supply the lack of introductory lectures usually given in the classroom. The treatment therefore is summary, aiming rather to give a correct evaluation of factors and forces than to present a detailed narrative of events. While expressly designed for the use of students in correspondence courses it may also be of value to others who do not propose making a more thorough study of the period which culminated in the separation from Great Britain and in the organization of a national government in the United States.

October, 1921.

MARTHA L. EDWARDS
Assistant Professor of History.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF UNITED STATES HISTORY

I.

PHYSIOGRAPHY

PHYSIOGRAPHY IN GENERAL

The character of any nation results from two forces: the land and the people who inhabit it. The influence of the land upon the history of a people is twofold. In the first place, it gives or restricts opportunity. It is impossible for people to live in any way they choose if they happen to inhabit the Arctic Circle. The kinds of life at their disposal are very limited. In the same way, the opportunities for different kinds of life in the tropics are very restricted. As civilization advances, the restrictive power of the land diminishes. For instance: Without transportation, people cannot live at all unless their immediate neighborhood furnishes them with both food and clothing. As transportation develops, it is possible for them to live and to earn their living, say, by mining, far remote from the regions that supply their food and clothing.

In the second place, the land has a determining influence on the development of civilization. A good harbor attracts to it people interested in commerce. A rich mine attracts those who wish its minerals. As civilization advances, the determining power of land becomes more powerful, and today one seaport may thrive and another decay because of saving a few cents in the freight rate to some mining district or agricultural region. In the same way, great factories may be moved from the coal district to the iron ore district if it becomes cheaper to take the coal to the iron rather than the iron to the coal.

In neither of these ways, however, does the land actually make history. For instance: The territory of the United States was long occupied by the red Indians. The difference between the Indian civilization and that of the Americans today shows that neither was entirely created by the land they occupied, but that the land of the United

**Restraints
of Nature**

**Direction
by Nature**

**American
Opportunity**

States is one which affords a wide range of opportunity for different kinds of civilization. America has been known as the "Land of Opportunity," and that perhaps is the most striking thing which may be said of the land itself before it was peopled.

LOCATION OF UNITED STATES

The first consideration to be noted in connection with any land is its location; and first of all, its location on the globe.

World Location

In determining the advantages of a country the most important factor is not the parallels of latitude and longitude, but the parallels of equal temperature, or isothermal lines. Now, with the exception of the tip of Florida and Alaska all of the United States lies between the isothermal lines of 40 and 70; and if we trace these lines about the globe we find that between them have lain all the great civilizations which have flourished in the past. The United States, then, possesses the possibility of developing a great civilization; whether it does or not will depend upon the people who inhabit it.

The next thing to note is that nine-tenths of all the territory in North America which does lie between the isothermal lines of 40 and 70 is included within the United States of today. This makes it morally certain that if the people in United States territory take advantage of their opportunities they will never have any neighbor of at all equal power. This has, of course, been true and has been one of the most important considerations in American history.

The third feature in our location is our relation to other civilizations, and here a glance at the map will show that America is bound to be more closely associated with Europe and its development than with Asia and its peoples. Not only is the Atlantic much narrower than the Pacific, but the ocean currents are more favorable to intercourse, the harbors are better on the Atlantic side, and the great barrier of the Rocky Mountains rises too near the Pacific coast to encourage the penetration of pioneer settlers.

Relations with Europe and Asia

CONFIGURATION

Turning to the character of the United States itself, we note as we approach from the Atlantic coast: First, a coast plain beginning at Cape Cod, growing broader as it sweeps down the coast, taking in Florida and continuing along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. This flat, sandy plain, with broad sinuous rivers, is very fertile where the rivers have deposited the soil which they have brought down from the back country, but barren and fit only for pine growth where the native sand crops out between. It is very narrow in the north, very broad in the south, and it became in time the seat of a special form of civilization.

Next, beginning at the seacoast in New England and running along back of the coast plain is the piedmont, or foothill region, rising gradually to the west into higher and higher hills until it blends into the third great area—that of the Appalachian Mountains. These start in clusters, such as the White Mountains and the Adirondacks, but in Pennsylvania take on the form of thirty or forty parallel mountain ranges sweeping first southward, then southwestward, and ending in northern Georgia and Alabama. From side to side they stretch 150 miles; from end to end, 700 miles.

Beyond them we enter the great plain of the Mississippi and the Great Lakes—one vast area of rich country sweeping from the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson Bay, the northern half draining through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River; the southern, by the Mississippi River. This great plain occupies more than half the territory of the United States.

Beyond it lies the great rugged country of the Rocky Mountains, sweeping in many precipitous ridges from the northern boundary to the southern, and stretching westward half a thousand miles almost up to the Pacific coast, whose foothill region forms California and breaks without any important coast plain into the sea.

The striking feature in the internal physiography of the United States is its simplicity. If one looked at the United States from the moon one would get the impression of a great central plain symmetrically surrounded by mountains sloping gently to the sea. In all the area of the United States there is no protected little territory where a small nation could live for many years, developing its own customs and characteristics. From end to end all is open. One would expect from the very nature of the land that although there might be shades of difference between the north and the south, the east and the west, and the middle and the extremities, there could be none of those sharply marked boundaries which make travel in Europe so interesting, none of those peculiar little civilizations developing in the secluded valleys of the Alps and the Apennines. Simplicity of design makes for political and economic unity. Here is one of the centralizing features of American history which has been observed by many of our greatest minds. James Russell Lowell said:

**Geographic
Unity**

"Be strong-backed, brown-handed, upright as your pines;
By the scale of a hemisphere shape your designs."

Lincoln said:

"That portion of the earth's surface which is owned and inhabited by the people of the United States is well adapted to be the home of one national family. It is not well adapted for two or more."

In this physiographic unity we see the opportunity for the union of the states, for the great industrial trusts, for the circulation of papers like the *Saturday Evening Post*, for the uniformity of clothing made for almost a continent by the same great tailoring establishments. The geographical unity assisted the genius of the people to make America one from end to end.

It is obvious that in the long run this unified nation would be controlled by the great central plain. But as the plain lay in the middle, and the land was to be populated by people from the outside, the people who seized the best approach were apt to control the plain. For many years France held the St. Lawrence and that easy avenue into all the northern area; and before the United States became a nation France was succeeded by England.

**Struggle for
the Great Plain**

France for many years, and after her Spain, controlled the Mississippi. To many persons it seemed inevitable that the nations which held these obvious natural outlets of this dominant physical feature would in the long run control the entire area.

Experience proved, however, that neither of these was really the natural approach. The St. Lawrence route is barred by Niagara Falls and the Lachine Rapids, and by ice for several months of the year. The Mississippi route is barred by the difficulty which its current offered to those coming up river and the dangers to which it exposed those going down. The really successful approach has been found to be through the mountains, and first down the Mohawk Valley where the great glaciers that at one time covered the whole northern part of the plain had found their outlet and scooped a trough down to the Hudson River, the bottom of which at no point rises more than four hundred feet above the level of the sea. Farther south the great rivers, running some eastward, some westward, broke out passes, and these passes are found to be the most convenient all-the-year-round exits and entrances to the central plain. After a long period of struggle, the people who had settled on the eastern coast succeeded in making good their hold on the plain, and since that day the traffic and intercourse of the plain have continued more and more to go eastward, the great railroads of the country going through these different passes and bringing the products of the west to the seaports of the east coast rather than to Montreal and to Quebec.

Nature, therefore, had much to do in determining the fact that the control of this great unified area should belong to those who first occupied its Atlantic coast. The question of the Pacific coast was somewhat different.

The Pacific Coast

Except from the sea it was much less accessible, and it remained for a long time a question as to whether the best approaches lay from the east or from the south. Here perhaps the fact that the people settling in the great plain were so numerous and powerful was more important than the element of natural location. If the Pacific coast had been developed earlier, nature would have counted for more. Develop-

ing as it did, late, the people had a greater share in determining its allegiance.

CLIMATE

The location and the configuration will tell you to a large degree what the climate will be, and the climate will tell more directly about the people than either of the others **Climate and Population** taken alone. People change anything more readily than climate, and similarity of climate in a new country is the surest attraction for immigrants from an old one. Thus in a general way in the United States we find Icelanders numerous in the extreme north, Swedes and Norwegians a little to the south of them, Germans somewhat farther south, and the bulk of our negro population in the extreme south.

One of the most important features of climate is the amount of rainfall. The amount of rainfall is, of course, determined by the absorption of water by heat and one can easily appreciate that the rainfall will be heaviest in the hot south near the Gulf of Mexico, and will grow less as one gets further away from the Gulf, until one reaches the Great Lakes where there is plenty of water but a little less heat and consequently a greater rainfall than midway between but not so great as on the Gulf. In the same way, the rainfall will diminish as one approaches the mountains, owing to the distance from large bodies of water.

The rainfall has a striking effect upon the civilization. For instance, a number of years ago one could easily tell the line at which the rainfall ceased to average twenty inches per year. This line happened to be about the one hundredth meridian. East of the line the railroad system was an intricate net; beyond, only a few great transcontinental lines stretched out. This was a result of the fact that where the rainfall did average twenty inches agriculture flourished; beyond was a region of cattle growing. In the last few years the development of irrigation has made this less marked. Another illustration of the importance of rainfall is to be found in the history of the Populist movement. Western Kansas and Nebraska were settled during a cycle of good rain years, when the rain in those regions was sufficient for agriculture. There followed a series of "lean years" when there was

too little rain, when crops failed, when mortgages fell due, and when the discontented farmers sought for relief in legislation.

Sixty inches of rainfall, such as one finds in Louisiana and South Carolina, allows the growth of sugar and rice; from forty to sixty allows cotton and tobacco. One finds as much as this over nearly all the southern and eastern states and in the vicinity of the Great

**Rainfall
and Crops**

Lakes. Between twenty and forty is the best amount for corn and wheat; and this is found in the area of the northwestern states and in the eastern portion of the great belt lying between the Mississippi and the Rockies. Under twenty inches prohibits most agriculture unless it is assisted by irrigation, and, therefore, the development of such areas must wait until the nation has accumulated sufficient resources to make heavy capital investments before opening them to population.

A second feature of importance in climate is the difference between extremes. It has been mentioned that most of the

United States lies between the isothermal lines of 40 and 70. But that is telling only half the story. What is the difference between summer

**Variability
of Climate**

and winter heat? While the average annual temperature of the United States is like that of the most highly civilized parts of Europe, there is a striking difference between American and European countries in this respect. For instance, New York and Naples vary only two minutes in latitude, New York is 40 degrees 50 minutes, Naples, 40 degrees 48 minutes. Naples averages 10 degrees warmer, the annual temperature averages being in New York 51.08, and in Naples 61.70. In winter Naples is nearly 20 degrees warmer, New York averages in winter 28.94, Naples 48.20. In summer, on the other hand, they are nearly alike, New York averages 75.56, Naples 77.18.

This difference led to many unpleasant surprises on the part of early explorers. For instance, Captain Weymouth reported

**Europeans
in America**

that the climate of the coast of Maine resembled that of southern France. The first settlers who came over there were surprised by the winter cold, and died before spring arrived. It has occasioned also great discussions as to the desirability of American or European residence. One of the great students of climate, Mr. Huntington, maintains that the essential

characteristic necessary to produce the highest civilization is variability of climate. For a long time, however, the European scientists maintained that neither human nor animal life could develop as highly in America as in Europe. Benjamin Franklin pointed with great glee to bones of a mammoth which were discovered in America, and not many years ago Phillips Brooks and two other six-foot-six clergymen got up in London to vindicate the possibilities of animal growth in America. The best study of this was made at the time of the Civil War, when men born in many different countries were measured on their entrance into the Union army. These figures are far from conclusive, but as far as they go they show that the European, after several generations in America, tends to become taller, to weigh a little more, but not to have quite so good a chest measurement. To this variability of the climate has been attributed also the American nervousness, and perhaps it may have been an element in creating American activity and hustle. At any rate it has of late years been universally recognized that the effect is a slight one, that the American climate is suited to a very high degree of development, but that it does create certain small physical differences from the European type. This fact was emphatically to be noted in the late war, where anyone could recognize at any distance a body of American troops in contrast to those of any other nation, because of some slight difference in their general makeup and carriage.

This greater variability in the American climate is, of course, due to the simplicity of our geography. The great winds bringing the cold of the Arctic and the heat of the tropics have a continental sweep from end to end; whereas Europe, with its numerous ranges of transverse mountains, breaks up each and makes it possible for regions like the Riviera to remain always warm within a short distance of such countries as Switzerland which has a climate never very warm.

It is almost as important that the American climate has suited European animals and vegetables as that it suited the human races developed in Europe. It was possible to bring over to America domestic animals and vegetables which represented millenniums of development and adjustment to human needs, and to put them at once to work for the benefit of man.

As a matter of fact, many of the indigenous products of America, owing to similarity of conditions, resembled those of Europe; and in many cases by grafting the highly cultivated European stock upon the wild native product a growth was immediately secured that combined the qualities of adaptation to the climate and long development. In such cross-breeding and adjustment have been found many of the most interesting American problems and some of the greatest American triumphs.

GEOLOGY

The fourth element in physiography which it is necessary to consider is the geology: that is, the fundamental rock of which America is composed and the way in which it has broken up and disintegrated into a soil.

The first soil which was actually used in the United States was alluvial: that is, washed down by rivers in flood-time and deposited on their banks. Such soil is apt to be very rich, but thin and easily used up. It does not, of course, stretch far back from the rivers, and between the alluvial deposits one finds very often poor and unfertile ground. In Virginia, for instance, where the river bottoms were very rich, the country between them was poor and sandy and adapted chiefly to growing pines. Consequently, one soon found cheek by jowl rich plantations flowing with all the fatness that earth can produce, and poor, struggling clearings which no amount of energy could turn into profitable farms. Such conditions naturally produced social classes widely varying, and thus affected the whole development of civilization in that region.

In other parts of the United States the soil has simply disintegrated without any disturbing factor. This is true of most of the South, except the coast plain and the valleys of its greatest rivers. Here, of course, the character of the soil is determined by the character of the rock lying immediately beneath. For instance, the best rock in this region is limestone. Where there is limestone, the soil produces a particularly luxuriant native grass. The early settlers used to spy out far in the distance these limestone bottoms on which grew what they called the blue grass; and when they found one

**Alluvial
Soil**

**Limestone
Bottoms**

unoccupied, they knew that they had secured the firm basis for lasting prosperity. The most important of these limestone areas are the blue grass region in Kentucky and the district about Nashville, in Tennessee. Quite closely around the edges of these areas, however, one finds a different rock which breaks up into a poorer soil; thus central Kentucky and eastern and southeastern Tennessee differ widely in their characteristics and history from these rich regions.

Over a very large area in the north, stretching about to the southern boundary of Wisconsin and including Michigan, New York, and New England, swept the glaciers. Here for centuries the rock was ground by ice and swept from place to place; rocks of all kinds being mixed together and deposited as a deep bed of soil fairly evenly over the whole region. The glaciers did not do their work so well as they might have; they left much of the rock insufficiently ground, and a soil full of boulders and hard to cultivate, but rich, deep, and similar over large areas; a soil out of which would naturally spring a hard-working democracy of equal farmers.

Glaciated Area

NATURAL PRODUCTS

The soil, with climate, determines the vegetable growth. Where the soil is favorable and the rainfall heavy, we may look for cotton and sugar. Where the soil is favorable and the rainfall moderate, we may look for corn and tobacco. No matter how good the soil or how good the climate, we will not find a satisfactory product unless the combination also is satisfactory.

Over large areas of America conditions were favorable for forest growth. This was a condition favorable to settlement, for the forests represented the most easily exploited accumulation of nature's capital. The forests supplied timber and fuel and something to send away and sell. In general, they supplied a very large amount of the capital which started American industries. A striking illustration is the state of Wisconsin, where in many towns the fortunes accumulated by the men who destroyed the forests have been used in starting new industries which have kept the towns alive and which will probably become permanently connected with them.

Forests

The United States is also rich in minerals, but except here and there the minerals were not important to the first settlers.

Minerals The first settlers did indeed look for minerals, but what they wanted was gold and silver, and very little gold and silver lay this side the Rocky Mountains. The coal and iron which make the Alleghanies one of the great industrial centers of the world today were of no interest to our ancestors until after the region in which they lay had long been settled.

The animal life produced by the physiographic conditions was more important to the first settlers than the minerals under the ground. It is hard to say whether the fur trade

Wild Animals or the lumber trade was more important in assisting man to establish himself on the continent.

To the first settlers fishing was almost as important as either, and was another one of the natural resources which made for the early triumph of the first colonists.

THE INDIANS

Nor should one forget the Indians. They are perhaps most striking as an illustration of the fact that physiography does not create a civilization but only permits it. The Indians had the same natural advantages as did the first European colonists, but they failed to touch even the lower limits of what we call civilization. To the first colonists, however, it was very important that there were human beings in America, and on the whole it was much more advantageous than disadvantageous. Wars and struggles did result, but no settlement of any importance ever started in America which did not begin by being on friendly terms with the Indians. Most of them were dependent for a while upon the Indians for food, and nearly all learned from the Indians how to adjust themselves to American conditions: what shellfish to eat and what to avoid; how to plant the great American product, corn; how to fertilize the American fields; and all the forest craft which we associate with American life and which our Boy Scouts are now perpetuating.

CHANGING PHYSIOGRAPHY

One must not think of physiography as any more fixed than the people who live within it; both are undergoing constant change. National character is constantly changing. In the seventeenth century the Dutch were the hustlers of Europe. In the early nineteenth century the Japanese were the most conservative and least progressive of peoples. And as the people change, so changes also the land. For instance, when the United States became a nation it stretched only to the Mississippi River; and yet it was argued that it was too large for one country, and in all probability the argument was sound. As a matter of fact, the United States today is to all intents and purposes not so large as the state of Massachusetts was in 1789. The change in this case, of course, has come from the development of transportation.

When one is talking of the United States in 1783, one should forget its mineral deposits. These practically did not exist for the inhabitants of that time. It was only later that they began to affect history.

An interesting illustration of how the effect of physiography upon the people of the land changes with the changing conditions is afforded by the case of New England's water power. In 1783 it was a mildly important source of wealth. At the falls of the rivers were flour and lumber mills. About 1810 New England capitalists began to develop manufacturing on a large scale. What they needed was power; so they went to the New England waterfalls and built their factories, and the New England population moved from the seacoast to these new cities, such as Lowell and Lawrence and Woonsocket. About the time of the Civil War it was found cheaper to use steam than water power. The coal was brought to New England from Pennsylvania by water. New factories were built up along the coast. The old inland factories were abandoned and the population left the inland towns and came back to the manufacturing coast towns. Most of the New England rivers have been harnessed again, now to produce electricity, and the electric current is taken far and wide over the country and once more factories are being dispersed here and there in attractive spots, in-

**Vanishing
Space**

**Emancipation
from Nature**

dependent of the location from which springs the power that they use. This illustration has been given to show that the effect of physiography upon the people is constantly varying, and that as we study history we must keep our eye constantly upon the land as well as upon the people who inhabit it.

II.

THE PLANTATION AREA

The first portion of the United States to be occupied by English colonists was the Atlantic coast plain. This plain, as has already been mentioned, stretches from Cape Cod to the Gulf of Mexico. The particular point first settled was along the western shore of Chesapeake Bay, where it is relatively wide and broken by many broad, sinuous rivers flowing between banks rich with the alluvial soil they have deposited, but between which lie barren, sandy stretches covered largely with pine forests. These rivers were subject to tidal flow for many miles from their mouths. This region is known in American history as the Virginia tidewater, and here there developed a novel civilization different in certain respects from any existing before, but which came to spread its influence over a very large portion of the South and to become one of the leading factors in our history.

The settlement of this region was not the work of the English government, but of the Virginia Company. This company was formed in the first place for commercial profit and received a charter from the King giving it a chance to occupy and govern a large area in America. Owing to circumstances the company fell ultimately under the control of certain liberal politicians, the most important of whom was Sir Edwin Sandys. Like many other persons of his time, Sir Edwin thought that in an unoccupied region like America one could realize all those ideals as to human happiness which in Europe were cramped down by tradition and the established governments. He was anxious, therefore, to make Virginia an Utopia. Fortunately, his leading ideas of human happiness were freedom and representative government. The net result of his influence, therefore, was that Virginia was on the whole left to develop naturally. Under these circumstances, the conditions of the coast plain and the character of the Virginia settlers speedily worked together to produce a civilization peculiar to themselves.

The first settlers of Virginia were not a very promising group. They were partly people who had not succeeded at home, and partly those who were forced to go. Only to a small extent were they men who deliberately desired to migrate to the new country. Conditions, however, gave them a very severe test. During the first years 60 per cent of those who arrived died within a year after landing, and owing to the change of climate involved in coming from England to Virginia many others continued to succumb. The consequence was that those who lived were individuals physically fit. It took the strongest kind of constitution to survive these first years, and the Virginians who lived to become ancestors had therefore a physique unusually vigorous. If the first settlers of Virginia were not selected by any other process, at least they were selected by the process of acclimatization.

**Physical
Selection**

About 1650 a new class of settlers began to come to Virginia who did much to give character to the region. These were refugees who had supported the cause of Charles I in England and after his defeat sought their fortunes elsewhere. They were known as Cavaliers. They belonged to the King's party, and the most important among them were country gentlemen of social and political importance. Their total number was not large, but their importance it is difficult to exaggerate. They contributed to Virginia not only sturdy lines of descendants but they set a goal of emulation which stirred the other settlers to adopt their manners and ideas.

Cavallers

Beginning actually in 1619, but growing very slowly until after 1700, was the negro population. These negroes were, of course, brought to Virginia as slaves, and after 1700 their importation was very rapid, so that by 1750 they constituted perhaps one-third of the population and continued in the same proportion for many years.

Negroes

MODE OF SETTLEMENT

When the first settlers reached Virginia they started out on a cooperative basis, all living together and working and sharing in common, all subject to the direction of the Company's officers. This scheme worked badly. There was much idleness and great dissatisfaction, so that in a very short time it was modified by giving each settler a small portion of land to cultivate for himself.

**Joint
Stock**

While most of the settlers still worked for the Company; they cultivated their own little patches with greater interest than the Company land; and finally, in 1616, one John Rolfe made a discovery which determined the success of the Virginia experiment. This was that tobacco could be grown in Virginia.

**Individual
Initiative**

At the time Rolfe discovered that Virginia would produce tobacco, the leaf was selling at a price which was equivalent to about five dollars a pound. The newly discovered art of smoking was becoming fashionable throughout Europe, stimulated perhaps by the violent opposition which it received from many, among others from King James. The tobacco planter suddenly burst into wealth as does the miner who makes a strike, and many of the first planters developed the same characteristic of spending.

Tobacco

The discovery that Virginia was suited for tobacco planting had a lasting importance in developing that area. In the first place, tobacco continued to be the principal product; and, in the second place, it determined the economic character of the whole life of the region. Tobacco became the Virginian staple. A staple product means one the production of which occupies the greater portion of the activity of a region and which is raised primarily for sale outside the region. Thus the Virginian came to devote nearly all his energies to the production of tobacco, and to buy practically everything he needed from other communities, paying for it in tobacco. Such a community, of course, is absolutely dependent for its existence upon its relations with the outside world. One must not exaggerate the extent to which this was true in the Virginia area. Many of the plantations produced not only other agricultural products but even manufactured brick and iron. Nevertheless, it was and remained true that the prosperity of Virginia was held to hang upon the tobacco crop and its sale, and that the planter was anxious to produce as much tobacco as he possibly could and to buy from the outside every other thing which he could purchase.

**The Staple
Crop**

Tobacco cultivation during the colonial period was most suc-

cessfully carried on by means of large, rather than small, plantations. In the first place, the easiest thing to do was to plant tobacco continually on the same field until it became barren, and then to take a new field rather than to fertilize from year to year. Thus the owner of large tracts, who could afford to cultivate only a part of them, skimmed off the richness of the alluvial soil and then went on to other virgin areas.

**Industrial
Cultivation**

In the second place, the great planter had advantages in disposing of his crop and in making his purchases. As a matter of fact, he usually could ship his crop direct from his plantation wharf to an agent in England and receive in return at his own wharf large consignments of goods. The smaller planters, who were not able to do business on such a scale, were forced to buy from the large planter, paying him large profits.

In the third place, the Virginia soil and weather permitted the employment of cheap and unskilled labor. In the Virginia coast plain there were no rocks to break ploughs and heavy winter clothing was not necessary. Consequently the large planter was able to keep at work gangs of convicts and slaves living in accordance with a standard which no self-respecting colonist would consent to imitate. Of course, a hard working, conscientious farmer could raise more tobacco per acre than could the large planter with slaves. But the difference was not sufficient to make up for the other disadvantages, and the Virginia system ran to size and rapid exploitation rather than to small farming and intensive cultivation.

Another factor which was very important in the development of Virginia and, in fact, of the whole South, was the matter of social ideal. Some of the first settlers and many of the Cavalier settlers of Virginia were younger sons of great English families. As soon as they began to reap the profits of their Virginia tobacco they sought to reproduce on their new plantations the style of houses and the mode of life to which they were accustomed in England, and to some extent they succeeded. This established a standard of living to which all the successful aspired. As a matter of fact, for a century and a half all through the southern coast plain and piedmont all men who were successful in life tried to adopt the standard of living established in Virginia within twenty years after its settle-

**Social
Standards**

ment, and to imitate the Cavalier Virginians even, if necessary, by the purchase of galleries of ancestral portraits. This standard of living demanded a certain income, and the effort to maintain this income was a strong factor in directing Virginian industrial development.

The process was something like this: A man would come over from England with little capital, or one of the early settlers would accumulate a little. This capital he would invest in land and in servants or slaves. During the early days of the tobacco bonanza it required only a few slaves and a small number of acres to produce an income on which a man could build an expensive house and set up his coach.

The success of such men attracted so many competitors, however, that in a very short time the price of tobacco went rapidly tumbling down, and the first successful planters found they could not maintain their houses unless they were able to produce more tobacco. To maintain the same income and the same standard of living it was necessary to increase the investment, and under these circumstances the less successful sold out to the more successful. Those who sold moved to newer regions where land was cheaper, or sank into the pine barrens; those who remained organized on a larger basis. Throughout the history of Virginia the price of tobacco was nearly always going down, while the price of slaves was nearly always going up. Consequently, the margin of profit per acre was steadily diminishing, and, therefore, increasingly larger plantations were needed to maintain the same standard of living.

These large estates came to be protected by legal devices: In the first place, by the law of primogeniture, in accordance with which the eldest son inherited all the real estate; and in the second place, by the law of entail, which placed the ownership of the land in the heir rather than in the planter himself who thus became only a tenant for life and unable to sell or mortgage the property.

THE TYPICAL PLANTATION

The typical plantation in the tidewater came to occupy the whole of some natural division of land, such as that which was nearly surrounded by the sinuous curves of the river. In Virginia these were known as necks of land, and each usually constituted a plantation. The plantation was really a little village all owned, including most of the people, by one man. In many respects it was economically independent. Most of the provisions were raised at home. There were usually carpenters and blacksmiths. Much of the clothing was spun and woven under the direction of the mistress, who often did also what doctoring was required. In education, which extended only to the children of the planter's family, the plantation again was independent, as tutors were employed.

Most of the outside business of the plantation was direct with England, whither the crop was sent from the plantation wharf and with it a list of everything which might be needed for the next year; tools, household wares, fine clothes made up by London tailors and dressmakers, wines, coaches, and, in general, the luxuries of existence.

On the plantation, the master ruled absolutely and all labor was on the basis of compulsion, performed by negro slaves or by white servants who were held under contracts, normally for seven years. Conditions of labor had at first been severe, but as years went on and the negro population came to be made up of descendants of negroes long on the plantation and closely connected with the family, conditions ameliorated, and although varying from plantation to plantation, were often genial and pleasant.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

While economic business was mostly with England, politics and religion brought the planter and his family into connection with his neighbors. On Sunday they were apt to go to the parish church, where after service the ladies gossiped on the lawn while the leading planters remained in the church to discuss public business, for the parish was the smallest political subdivision. It was governed by a vestry

consisting of the leading planters, who served for life and whose vacancies were filled by the vote of those left in the vestry. The parish vestry attended to roads, bridges, and to the poor; but after all there was not much business, as each planter actually made his own roads and looked after the poor on his own plantation. Parish rates, or taxes, therefore were low and matters of public interest few.

The next division of local government was the county, which consisted of a number of parishes. A county courthouse with a tavern or two near at hand would be built at

County

some crossroads, and here the justices of the peace would meet as the county court, usually four times a year. These justices were appointed by the governor, but he rarely failed to appoint the most important planters of the county, and when one of these died, to appoint his son. The justices individually had certain judicial powers and certain others that they exercised when they sat together as a court; and they also had certain political powers, controlling the militia and supervising the work of the parishes.

Occasionally, at county court there was the excitement of an election to the "House of Burgesses," or representative assembly.

Elections

Two leading planters would stand as candidates, treat the crowds from rival taverns, make speeches from the balconies, and on election day the people would divide into two groups and be counted.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TIDEWATER

In the tidewater there were three classes of people: slaves, who were negroes; poor whites, living in the pine barrens or acting as servants; and planters. All the power was in the hands of the planters. Each possessed great powers on his own plantation and was not accustomed to be interfered with by the government, for governmental powers were very few. So little government was there that the planters even assessed their own taxes.

The life of the planter was a great school for practical affairs. He had the entire control of a considerable population who were dependent upon him for their livelihood and who came to him with all their troubles, domestic, social, and economic. He, on the other hand, was in frequent intercourse with other equal planters, with whom he must accustom himself to argue and to agree.

Not less important was the social training which the plantation afforded. Remote from neighbors, the planters and their families greeted strangers with enthusiasm and hospitality. Society did not oppress them and they, therefore, sought it. Conversation became a great art, and the social charm developed on the tidewater plantation remained for generations a distinct asset even in political life in United States history. Washington lay in the Virginia area and the fascination of the Virginia hospitality won many northerners to the support of southern views.

These were opportunities the plantation afforded the individual, opportunity offered with lavish hand. On the other hand, if the planter did not wish to make use of his opportunity he might easily fail to do so; so that writers on Virginia might visit one plantation and find a harsh and brutal master, ignorant and coarse, and on the next, one devoting his leisure to literature and thought, and fascinating his associates with a philosophy both individual and erudite.

To sum up the characteristics of the tidewater aristocracy: first, came love for independence and hatred of governmental control. Secondly, the planters thought themselves to be democratic, for among themselves there was a strong sense of the equality of all gentlemen, and other people were so far beneath them that they did not count. Everybody who was anybody in Virginia was somebody. Thirdly, they developed great administrative capacity and qualities of leadership. In the first seventy-five years of United States history the proportion of leaders who came from this class was immensely beyond the proportion its numbers could justly be expected to give. Fourthly, they were characterized by a charm of manner which came to count as a distinct asset in politics. Finally, they did not believe in the actual equality of all men, but recognized that they belonged to a distinct and superior class. It was characteristic of them that they did not care to exact privileges but rather considered themselves bound thereby to service. The best expression of the ideal Virginian is given in an address of Robert E. Lee: "The forbearing use of power does not only form a touchstone, but the manner in which an individual enjoys certain advantages over others is a test of a true gentleman. The power the strong have over the weak, the magistrate over the citizen, the employer over the employed, the educated over the unlettered, the experienced

over the confiding, even the clever over the silly—the forbearing or inoffensive use of all this power or authority, or a total abstinence from it when a case admits it, will show the gentleman in the true light.”

EXTENT OF THE PLANTATION AREA

The form of industrial organization and social life developed in the Virginia tidewater soon spread, with certain modifications, over the tidewater region to the north in Maryland and southward through North and South Carolina into Georgia.

In the piedmont region, between the tidewater and the mountains, plantation life was possible, but there the individual owner of a small farm could hold his own. In all this piedmont region, from Maryland to Georgia, one finds by 1800 a mixed civilization, with the plantation owners the leading class, but with a sturdy, independent population of farmers working with their own hands. In this region such planters as Jefferson and Patrick Henry assumed and held the leadership of the smaller farmers and made it the basis of their political power. The dominant element, however, consisted of the larger planters, and by 1783 the plantation had become a type so firmly established that in later years it spread rapidly over all the country suited to its development, down round the end of the Alleghany Mountains, along the Gulf of Mexico, and then up the Mississippi Valley to the Ohio and the Missouri.

It is to be noted that the plantation method of cultivation exploited land rather than cultivated it. John Randolph said:

Exploitation “Virginia was poor by nature and ruined by cultivation.” New land was constantly demanded; profits per acre and per slave were constantly diminishing. Plantations were constantly growing in size. Economically the plantation system swept like a devastating fire, eating up the virgin richness of the soil.

From another point of view the plantation system opened to cultivation many areas which would not have been cultivated

Distribution except for slavery. The rice lands of South Carolina and many other regions were unfitted to attract free labor in competition with the lands of the great Northwest. It was only by compulsory labor that much of the

region which the plantation system spread over could have been so promptly brought under cultivation. Again, the total profits produced on a plantation were always small. Had they been divided equally, no one would have fared so well as did the population in many other parts of the country. It was only by concentrating the profits in the hands of a few that the fine flower of Virginia civilization was enabled to flourish.

III.

NEW ENGLAND

PHYSIOGRAPHY

New England is a great granite mass. On the east this has been bitten into by the sea. On the south the descent is more gradual and the rivers flowing from the hills have brought down enough deposit to create a small coast plain. Everywhere are hills and rapidly flowing rivers running down widening valleys into natural harbors. The whole was glacier swept, and the soil, while hard to cultivate, is deep and rich.

In 1783 most of the New Englanders made their living by agriculture. There were rich and flourishing farms at the valley mouths and in the valleys of the larger streams such as the Connecticut and the Merrimac. But as settlers pushed up these valleys they found the meadow land became narrower and they were forced to eke out a scanty existence by cultivating little crannies among the rocks. Most of the New England farmers, in fact, to keep body and soul together, had to do many things besides farming. Not only did they do their own farm labor, for hired labor could not be trusted to till the rough and rocky soil, but they were accustomed to making all their simple tools; their wives, to supplying the household with its clothes and provisions of all kinds; and on winter nights they sat around the fire and made nails or boots or hats, each according to his craft.

While agriculture afforded a living for the majority, it afforded wealth for very few, and wealth had to be sought elsewhere, particularly in fishing. The New England coasts were rich in fish. The New Englanders, however, were not content with these but sought them also on the banks of Newfoundland many hundreds of miles away, where fishermen must often remain for months in their little craft. Fishing demanded boats, and the forests of New England growing down close to the water's edge and the innumerable little natural harbors afforded material and opportunity for ship construction.

The New Englanders caught many more fish than they could

eat, and in order to find a market for them they had to construct
Commerce larger vessels which could sail the ocean to the
 West Indies or to such Catholic countries as
 Spain, Portugal, and Italy, where the demand for fish was keen.
 When selling their fish they naturally found it easy to buy foreign
 goods to bring home on the return voyage and sell. Thus in
 addition to fishing and shipbuilding the New Englanders became
 expert in commerce.

Some of the trade which the New Englanders found it natural
 to carry on was contrary to the Navigation Laws of England,
 and, consequently, they found it convenient to have ships which
Shipbuilding were not only seaworthy but also swift. Bristol,
 Rhode Island, where the cup defenders have been
 so successfully built for many years, inherits its tradition of
 speedy craft from the smugglers of the Colonial period.

It is evident that from the physiography alone New England
 was certain to produce a type of citizen very different from Vir-
 ginia. Agriculture was an individual matter and not an organized
 industry. The New Englander was skilled in many crafts, de-
 veloping a genius for mechanics. He acquired commercial
 shrewdness and his commerce took him out into the wide world
 where its success or failure might be affected by the policy of
 the government, and, consequently, he was accustomed to govern-
 mental interference. This he did not resent, but he sought to
 secure control of the government in order that he might profit
 by the adjustment of its policy.

THE PEOPLE

These differences resulting from physiography were em-
 phasized by others in the character of the population. The
 population coming to New England was remarkably homogene-
 ous. It was in the first place English, in the second place Puri-
 tan. One of the early New England ministers said: "God
 sifted a whole nation that he might send the choice grain to
 New England." Whether one agrees that it was choice or not,
 at any rate it was sifted. It was, in fact, as if today, a new
 country having been discovered, it should be settled not merely
 by Americans but by Americans who were Republicans and also
 Methodists. Under these circumstances one must expect cer-
 tain distinctive characteristics, and in order to understand them

one must know something of the nature of the sieve that sifted these New Englanders.

In the first place, this was religious opinion. And very briefly one may say that the kernel of their belief was that God made a contract with Adam; Adam broke it, and thereupon came to be justly at God's mercy. God, then, out of his grace, made a second covenant with Christ, in return for whose sacrifice he agreed to save a certain number of the human race from the punishment due to Adam's descendants. These were known as the "elect," and no one but the elect could be saved.

These contracts were very real and vivid to the Puritans. Many drew up their own individual contracts with God and kept diaries which were really daily account books. No one could know who were the elect, but certainly no one was elect unless his deeds were good. The result was this constant self-examination; for nothing was so important to the first few generations of New Englanders as this perpetual and awful question: Am I of the elect who will go to Heaven, or am I of the unelect who will go to Hell?

These ideas were so strong in their religion that they carried them over into their politics, and there also the contract played the central part. They conceived of their charters from the King as contracts with the King.

Every magistrate they considered under contract with the people who chose him. Philosophically they thought back that the beginning of all government must have been a contract. Contract and law played a very large part in their whole political thought. In 1638 those who settled in Connecticut drew up what is really the first written constitution in history, and Daniel Webster's defense of the Dartmouth College charter was but an inheritance of this central idea, where religion and politics blended together, and where contracts religious, political, and private acquired some of the sanctity of a religious agreement.

To the early New Englanders the life after this world was so important that this life was somewhat overshadowed. And as one could never be certain who would in the next world be saved and who would not, this led to a certain basic sense of equality. This was strengthened by the fact that all men would be judged by the same law, and

so equality before the law and one law for all became fundamental New England conceptions.

The habit of constantly examining one's deeds to discover whether one had a chance of salvation developed among New Englanders an active self-consciousness. They seldom acted without thought, and they always strove to act on some moral principle, though it must be confessed that they were very expert at making moral principles coincide with their wishes. This habit of viewing all questions from a moral point of view came to be known as the "New England conscience" and played a large part in American politics.

The Puritans did not come to America to establish freedom for all comers, but to build up a community according to their own ideas. They were, therefore, from the very beginning particular as to whom they admitted into their community. In spite of their care, however, many came over of whom they did not approve. For the Puritans were the Liberal Party of that day. Liberals are apt to agree when they are in opposition to Conservatives, but when left alone they find innumerable differences among themselves. The Puritan communities, therefore, felt it their duty to weed out these discordant elements. It is quite improper to seek excuses for their intolerance; rather they believed that tolerance was a vice and disapproved of it. As Governor Dudley wrote:

"Let men of God in courts and churches watch
O'er such as do a toleration hatch;
Lest that ill egg bring forth a cockatrice
To poison all with wickedness and vice."

Such ideas made it necessary for the Puritan communities to adopt a strong government capable of dealing with these disturbing elements, and so, while they believed in one law and in fundamental equality, they inculcated also reverence for magistrates and tried to select them from the ablest men among them. As John Cotton said of New England, it was "neither merely aristocratical nor merely democratical, but mixed."

MODE OF SETTLEMENT

The Puritans came over to New England in groups already organized, in many cases with a minister, generally with some

wealthy man who financed the undertaking, with independent associates, and with servants whose expenses were paid for them and who were to work them out in America. Such groups settled in some naturally isolated location, on harbor or hill.

The conditions of New England agriculture soon developed about such settlements a number of small farms worked by their owners. The most important man in each group was the minister, who was a person of education, had a small library, and was settled for life, generally owning and farming some land himself. Quite often the rich founder developed into a squire, somewhat better off than his neighbors—sending his sons to Harvard, having a better seat at church, but having no special privileges and no control over the community, and very rarely having tenant farmers as he would have had in England.

These communities, which soon came to be known as towns, were separated from each other by miles of forests infested by wild animals and Indians. Within each of them the community life was strong. Everyone went to the same church and was fined if he did not go. The cattle belonging to all were generally herded in a common field, being taken care of by someone selected for the post. No one was rich enough, as were the Virginia planters, to have a tutor, so they combined together and had a schoolmaster. Where there were any poor they levied a town tax to take care of them. In fact, taxes were levied for many things and the governmental control was strong.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The form of government was known as that of the town meeting. Practically all men who were regular members of the community attended the town meeting which met at least once a year, and all power was in their hands. When they adjourned, they elected a number of "selectmen" who represented the town meeting when it was not in session but could not take final action without reporting it to the next meeting to be held. These selectmen were in addition to the officers who performed the functions of the town. This town government performed nearly all the public duties that had to be done locally; the New England counties amounted to very little except in the way of being centers for the holding of courts.

SPREAD OF NEW ENGLAND POPULATION

Life in a New England town was very carefully regulated. You could not possibly escape the eagle eye of your neighbors. People were thrust upon you, and, consequently, there was less delight in society and less spirit of hospitality than one finds in Virginia. Your whole conduct on Sunday was carefully regulated by law, and your private conduct, even in such things as how soon you should remarry after losing husband or wife, was almost equally controlled by public opinion. Yet the New Englanders brought over in germ nearly all the liberal ideas of later times. They were keenly individualistic. One gets, therefore, in New England life a conflict between the moulding force of the community and the self-expression of the individual.

One form which this took was the continual separation of New England towns like cheese cells, the smaller dissatisfied section going off to the north or to the west to found a new community which might realize its ideals and in which again a dissatisfied section soon developed which separated once more and carried the fundamental New England characteristics constantly farther and farther to the westward. By 1783 this impulse toward growth had spread the New England population thinly out over the southeast two-thirds of what is now New England, across the water into Long Island, then by the special enticements of land owners into northern New Jersey, and by means of controversies over lands between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, into the northern part of the latter state. From Vermont they were beginning to spread down the Mohawk, and in the course of a few years they were found settling about Rochester and central New York and in the northeastern part of Ohio.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW ENGLANDERS

The combination of land and of people developed among the New Englanders certain outstanding characteristics which affected their views and their importance in American politics.

In the first place, they represented the agricultural interests of small, land working farmers, and of merchants and seamen

engaged in commerce all over the world. These latter particularly felt the need of a strong national government behind them, and saw many ways in which a favorable national policy might increase their profits.

The New Englanders were accustomed to a strong government. They had a great respect for law, which they considered as resting upon the sacred principle of contract. They recognized differences between men, but they believed that the same law should be imposed upon all alike.

They had a wide conception of what the scope of government should be, and they looked at all political questions as being moral questions also.

Conscious of their consciences, the New Englanders regarded themselves as superior to their neighbors and believed themselves responsible for their neighbors' welfare. Lacking in geniality and in charm, they had a strong missionary impulse to go out and convert the world. Whenever New England discovered a new idea it straightway began to propagate it throughout the country.

IV.

THE MIDDLE STATES

PHYSIOGRAPHY

The physiography of the Middle States combines some of the characteristics of Virginia and of New England in addition to having its own distinctive features. There is a coast plain consisting of Long Island and parts of New Jersey and Delaware, a broad piedmont, and back of these a mountainous country consisting in New York of clustering mountains glacial swept as in New England, and in Pennsylvania of the beginnings of the long, continuous Appalachian ridges.

In the Middle States these general features are broken by three great rivers: The Hudson, the Delaware, and the Susquehanna, each of which flows on the whole from north to south, is navigable for a long distance, and then enters a great harbor: New York Harbor, Delaware Bay, and Chesapeake Bay. The headwaters of all these rivers penetrate to the westward the mountain mass, and their first springs are close to those of the waters flowing westward to meet the Mississippi. Between these various sources lie most important passes between the east and the west. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the mouth of each river there has grown up a great city, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, each of which already in 1783 commanded the trade of its own valley and which shortly afterwards became an outlet for the far western region. In fact, the struggle between these three cities for the command of Western trade is one of the most fascinating chapters of American economic history.

The Three Divisions

THE HUDSON

In each of these river valleys a somewhat distinctive civilization had developed. The earliest was that in the Hudson, where its character was given by the first immigrants, who in this case came from Holland. The Dutch settled in this region in two ways: In the first place, there were traders who made New York from an early period a commercial center. In the second place, the

Commerce

farming region was settled in a peculiar and distinctive manner which established in the United States the only example of feudalism that really took root. The Dutch Company, which owned the region, was anxious to attract to America some men of wealth. In order to induce them to come it offered them certain feudal privileges.

Such settlers were known as patroons and became owners of patroonships. These were districts running eight miles along the river and sixteen miles back, or of such corresponding size. On this territory the patroon built a large house for himself, and the area about it he cultivated as a great estate, something like the Virginia planter. The remainder of the territory he rented out to tenants under conditions which were not very burdensome but which constituted a distinct inferiority. The New York patroon, therefore, resembled somewhat an English country gentleman, as he was surrounded by a free peasantry over whom he nevertheless exercised a certain amount of authority. Even down into the nineteenth century a patroon generally controlled at least one seat in the legislature, the electors of the district being his tenants, who scarcely ventured to vote against him.

Religiously, the Dutch were much in sympathy with the Puritans, belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church. They were not, however, quite so accustomed as were the Puritans to considering all matters from a moral point of view.

Politically, they were accustomed to free institutions, but in Holland business and politics were very closely bound together, and the Dutch did not take the interest in political principles that one finds either in Virginia or New England.

THE DELAWARE

Its most important characteristics were given to the Delaware region by the Quakers. Their settlement came rather late, in 1682, under the leadership of William Penn. His colony at Philadelphia, however, was the most carefully planned and the largest movement of population made at one time during the Colonial period, and it was the most immediately successful, for which

some of the credit must be given to Penn himself, much to the character of his associates.

Religiously, the Quakers were diametrically opposed to the New England and Dutch Calvinists. They were mystics. Their fundamental belief was that the Holy Ghost was constantly revealing the truth to proper individuals, and, consequently, they put less emphasis on the authority of the Bible, and in fact on authority altogether, than did the Puritans. Nevertheless, they gave great importance to any true revelation once made, and sometimes taking some particular text of the Bible worked it out to its conclusion with a logic which was another of their special characteristics.

Particularly important to them was the text: "If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other cheek also."

Non-resistance This led them to the doctrine of the tolerance of evil and of non-resistance to evil which became with them cardinal points. They therefore did not attempt to control others who came to their settlement, although their own life was strictly controlled by their church organization. Ultimately they lost political control of their district, particularly owing to their passive attitude during the Revolution which made many regard them as Tories sympathetic to England. This control they never regained. Socially, however, they continued to dominate Philadelphia and the region about, and this social control was very important, for nowhere has there been a community more ready to take up and initiate humanitarian reforms. Consequently, in 1783 Philadelphia had the best hospitals and prisons, and some of the best social legislation, of any of the cities of America.

Advanced as were the Quakers in their social ideas, they were content to practice them and did not seek to convince others of their utility as did the Puritans.

Social Reform Very frequently one finds New Englanders and Quakers advocating the same reform, as, for instance, the abolition of slavery; but their methods were diametrically opposed, those of the Quakers being confined to quiet argument, the New Englanders using every weapon, intellectual and political, that they could discover.

THE SUSQUEHANNA

Into the Susquehanna there poured a mixed population. But in 1783 perhaps the majority consisted of the Germans who are known in American history as Pennsylvania Dutch. These were for the most part Germans coming from the Palatine Rhine region who were impoverished or driven out by the wars of Louis the Fourteenth and sought refuge in all Protestant countries. William Penn traveled in Germany among them and offered them a refuge in America of which many took advantage. Coming in the first part of the eighteenth century they remained in 1783 for the most part in separate communities, still speaking, though in a somewhat degenerated form, the German language.

The Pennsylvania Dutch stock had fine intelligence and capacities, and by the time of the Revolution was furnishing many leaders to the American cause. The bulk of the population, however, was very conservative, resented outside interference, and politically were lacking in that inheritance of experience in free institutions which characterized the settlers in Virginia, New England, the Hudson, and the Delaware.

Religiously, they were Lutherans or Quakers. Still, among them the idea of contract as a basis of human relationships played a large part, and they were responsive to the argument that when in America we had to found a new government it should be expressed in the form of a written constitution.

OTHER STRAINS OF POPULATION

The first settlers in the Delaware had been the Swedes. They were few in numbers and left few descendants; still, here and there there were enough to form a church community, and they had some influence on the life of the region.

Across the mouth of the Hudson valley and in the upper part of the Delaware and Susquehanna valleys were large numbers of New England communities, some like those of New Jersey dating back one hundred years, others like those in the upper Delaware and Susquehanna founded just before the Revolution, and

as these claimed their land on grants from Connecticut, at odds with the Pennsylvania government.

Throughout the region were many settlers who came over without any particular group connection and these settlers prevented the formation of as distinct a type of society as one finds in New England or Virginia. Most numerous were the English; next perhaps in influence were the French Huguenots; then the Scotch-Irish and the Welsh.

POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS

It is evident that politically the Middle States region differed very much from New England and from the South. Owing to their doctrine of non-resistance the Quakers were more or less a dead weight in politics. The Germans were without political experience. The Dutch were trained in a school of commercial politics. Moreover in each of the colonies and later states into which the district was divided there were unsympathetic groups: In New York, the city itself; the patroons of the river; the New Englanders of Long Island; and some German settlers in the Mohawk. And so in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Politics, therefore, took the form of factional conflict and factional bargains. It was impossible to secure majorities supporting one set of ideas, but rather composite majorities made up of different factions each of which hoped to gain something by the combination.

Factions

Owing to the lack of general political experience, moreover, politics were coming to be not so much a matter of individuals as of organizations. In order to make a political appeal to these populations unaccustomed to free institutions, it was necessary to organize them, and consequently already in 1783 party organization was developed.

Organization

In general then there developed in the Middle States a habit of tolerance to divergent ideas, of governing by compromise and agreement. The Middle States is not a region to which one would look primarily for political principles, but without the kind of political experience there developed it is hard to see how New England and Virginia could have

been made to march together in United States history. The managing politicians who have put through a large part of American legislation originated in this area.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The local government of this region combined the characteristics of New England and Virginia. In New York the country was divided into counties which exercised a little more power than those in New

Towns

England, and into towns. The towns were governed by supervisors, and the supervisors of all the towns in a county met together in a representative assembly to govern the county.

In Pennsylvania, as in Virginia, the county was more important, but the county officers instead of being chosen by the governor, as they were in Virginia during the Colonial period, were elected by the

Counties

people. These local government forms in the Middle States are extremely important because as population moved westward through the Mississippi valley it carried them along. The upper strata of states adopted the New York system, the lower strata the Pennsylvania system, and a state like Illinois, which runs so long from north to south, has both systems at work at the same time, the representative town and county government in the northern part, the dominant county in the southern.

V.

THE FRONTIER

In 1783 there was still another section which stood out with its own marked characteristics. This we may call the Frontier.

**What the
Frontier
Means**

In speaking of the Frontier, however, we must remember that in American history the Frontier has continually advanced. What we mean by the term is that area in which man comes into first-hand contact with the wild and begins the process of civilization. When the children of the first settlers grow old enough to take things in their hands the Frontier stage has passed.

Life on the Frontier develops certain characteristics. There are certain problems that must always be faced, and these produce certain results on character and habits, whether the Frontier be in Ohio, Alaska, New Zealand, or South Africa. One of the causes of the difference between the American point of view and that of European countries today arises from the fact that so large a portion of our population are descendants of frontiersmen and have inherited something of these characteristics and this point of view. In order to understand the United States in 1783 we must, therefore, know something of this Frontier element.

In addition the Frontier has had special characteristics according to the nature of the country in which it happens to be located at any particular time. In 1783 the Frontier was a region of special physical characteristics, a region in fact of such marked characteristics that it has changed less since 1783 than almost any other part of the country, and a description given at this point would fit many parts of it even today. This region was that of the Appalachian Mountains, particularly that portion of them stretching seven hundred miles long, from central Pennsylvania south and southwestward to northern Georgia and Alabama. This range is about one hundred fifty miles wide and consists of thirty or forty parallel ridges with valleys between, stretching in many cases unbroken for hundreds of miles. In itself it constitutes one of the most difficult obstacles to transportation that can be conceived. Even today railroads can afford neither to go up and down the ridges nor to tunnel through ridge after ridge. Fortunately, however,

**The Frontier
in 1783**

there are places where a river breaks through numbers of these ridges, making gaps more or less opposite each other, and these gaps make the entrances and the exits of the region and are the passes over which traffic between the Mississippi and the Atlantic has gone from the days of the Indian trail to those of the railroad.

POPULATION

In the eighteenth century the most convenient entrance to this region lay in central Pennsylvania. Naturally, therefore, many of the Germans of the Susquehanna valley entered it; also individual immigrants coming down from New England, like the Lincoln family, which landed in Massachusetts, pausing for a while in Connecticut and New Jersey, finally came to Pennsylvania, entered these mountain troughs, and descended through them as far south as Kentucky, from which it emerged by one of the passes on the other side.

The most important element in the population, however, consisted of a new group of immigrants who began in the first quarter of the eighteenth century to arrive in great numbers at Philadelphia and who found the best land between the seaboard and the mountains taken up. These were the Scotch-Irish who were to become one of the most important ingredients of the American population.

The term Scotch-Irish does not mean a mixture of Scots and Irish, although some were so mixed. It means Scottish families who settled in Ireland early in the seventeenth century and remained there for a number of generations before they emigrated to America. For the most part they were Lowland Scots and consequently not to any large degree Celtic, but a mixed population with Saxon, Celtic, and Norman elements.

When they left Scotland that country was the seat of what was probably the most highly diffused intellectual life in Europe. The whole population, noble and peasant, were given to sharpening their wits on theological discussions, than which there is no better steel to edge one's intellectual faculties.

Economically however Scotland was one of the poorest countries of Europe, and consequently the Scots were accus-

tomed to a hard life. Nor did they find Ireland softer. In fact, it was because of their failure for various reasons to make an easy living in Ireland that they undertook the still further emigration to America. Consequently they were well prepared for the hardships which they found on the American Frontier, and became very quickly the typical vanguard of the American advance across the continent.

FRONTIER ADVANCE

On this Frontier population advanced not so much in the form of organized unities like the New England towns or the Virginia plantations, but by individuals and families. A man went forth into the wilderness with an ax on one shoulder and rifle on the other, secured some title to a bit of land or seized it without a title, hewed down trees and built him a cabin, sowed a crop of wheat or corn in the cleared space, and hunted in the neighboring woods for the game that gave him meat. If not already married, he would fare forth somewhere in the neighborhood and secure a wife, and then would raise a family on the clearing that he had started. As the boys grew older they generally would not care to settle in the immediate neighborhood. It was not so much that land was not available, as that the immigrants from Europe, where for centuries it had been impossible to secure the ownership of any land at all, tended to become intoxicated by the abundance of land opportunity in America and acquired the habit of shifting from spot to spot.

When the spirit of movement got into their blood a number of the boys of the family, sometimes with their father, would start off down the valley in the autumn. After they had traveled a reasonable distance they would keep their eyes open for the "blue grass" that indicated a good limestone bottom and fertile soil. Here they would sow a crop of winter wheat and after that return home. The next spring they would come down with the women and such household goods as they had, and erect a log cabin where their wheat was growing.

A typical illustration of this shifting population is that of the Boone family, which was not Scotch-Irish at all, but English. The grandfather settled fourteen miles from Phil-

adelphia. His son moved up into the valley region. In 1750, when Daniel was sixteen, they all moved down to the Yadkin Valley, taking two years to make the shift. In 1760 Daniel crossed the mountains westward on a hunting trip, and after many such trips, in 1775 he moved his family into Kentucky.

The pristine freshness of the Frontier conditions passed away when families began to settle near each other and pioneer farming with the sale of farm products and the beginning of ordered life appeared in a district. The simple manners of the Frontier with the dash of chivalrous courtesy which the sharing of common dangers gives were merged into the rather humdrum life of the countryside. Men like Daniel Boone resented this change of atmosphere, and in 1799 he moved on into Missouri. At the age of eighty-six, in 1820, Missouri was getting too thickly settled for him and he was planning a further move which was stopped by death. Subsequent generations of the family continued the westward movement, and thousands of such families became expert subduers of the wilderness and prepared the way for a more ordered civilization to follow them.

CHARACTERISTICS

The characteristics of the Frontier population reflected very directly the conditions under which it lived. The frontiersman was notably lacking in the refinements of civilization, very narrow minded, and obstinate as to things with which he was not familiar. There was very little opportunity for education in the usual sense, and its absence is shown in the inability of the frontiersmen to appreciate the point of view of other people.

On the other hand, the Frontier stock was physically vigorous and effective, for only the vigorous could survive. While education was lacking, the brain was kept sharp because it was a life which required the constant exercise of intelligence. Every man and every woman had to be prepared to face a great variety of tasks and problems and to solve them or succumb. It was a population extremely self-reliant because individuals did everything for themselves, and as they saw conditions gradually improving around them they knew it to be the work of their hands and their minds; thus they acquired a confi-

dence in the power of man to accomplish any results to which he turned his attention.

Politically the population was of mixed experience. There were many of New England and Virginia stock, many Germans, and predominantly the Scotch-Irish. These last named had not been at home accustomed to free, self-governing political institutions, but this lack had been made up to some extent by their church organization. This was the Presbyterian system in which every church had an organization resting upon a written contract and all the churches were bound together by representative synods. They were therefore accustomed to settling questions by free discussion, and to viewing the principles of government as resting through a contract on the consent of the governed, and to a representative system. Thus their church organization prepared them for American institutions.

The Frontier was democratic in a very literal sense. Practically everyone began life on equal terms and succeeded according to his natural abilities without the advantage of any special start or any special privilege. Economic conditions were as equal as those of politics, and each individual expected to be let alone and was expected to manage his own affairs. Sometimes, however, the frontiersmen found it necessary to unite, particularly for defense against Indians. On such occasions they selected a man who stood out because of his nerve and courage and personal magnetism to lead them. If he led them successfully they turned naturally to him when the next occasion arose. Politics on the Frontier centered around personalities, and political careers, like the daily life of the frontiersman, presented an infinite variety of experience. The same man one finds as military commander, as judge, as governor, as representative in Congress. Each frontiersman tended to be jack-of-all-trades, and the man who obtained the confidence of the community in one respect was supposed to be competent for any other task of leadership that might arise.

SPREAD OF THE FRONTIER POPULATION

In 1783 the mountain valley region was reasonably well filled with people. If it had not been for the mountain valleys the

population coming in at Philadelphia would probably have moved directly westward. Caught as it was by mountains, it was deflected to the south, and so from central Pennsylvania to northern Georgia one finds a similarity of traits and conditions. By 1783 some of this population had begun to ooze out of the mountains eastward into the piedmont of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. But as one went south there came to be a gap of unsettled territory between the settlements advancing from the coast and those descending from the mountains. The political lines of division between the states ran directly westward, and thus all of the states from Pennsylvania southward had an eastern element which was in the majority and ruled, and a western element which was in the minority and had little share in making the laws and over whom the laws had little effect. John Mair, who was traveling in America in 1791, writes from Charleston, South Carolina: "I am told that the country beyond the hills is a fine climate and soil though inhabited by refugees from Virginia whose manners are more savage than the Indians, but they are a strong, hardy race and I make no doubt in time will become respectable to their neighbors." As a matter of fact, there were already born in this region men like Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, McDuffie, and others, who were to determine the course of American politics for many years.

Toward the west population was also beginning to ooze out from the gap at Pittsburg from which the Ohio emerges, down the Kanawha into what is now West Virginia, and out of Cumberland Gap, and the passes of the Tennessee. Already the great blue grass region of Kentucky and the great Tennessee blue grass region around Nashville were oases of settlement.

VI.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN AMERICAN PEOPLE

WHAT MAKES A PEOPLE

We have now established in the area of the United States four distinct types of civilization, occupying four distinct sections of the country, each of which retains throughout American history some of the characteristics which have been stated and all of which remain separate forces to be reckoned with. It is obvious that sectionalism will be an important feature in the history of our country, that it will require constant care and attention, and will call for a constant succession of able statesmen to reconcile these different points of view and different interests. Always in American history there have been and there continue to be elements working away from union.

**Sectional
Conflict**

On the other hand, we have already observed that there are in the physiography of the country factors tending toward unity, and among the people settled on the land in 1783 there were equally elements of union. American history will then to a considerable degree be made up of the struggle between these rival forces tending to unity and disunity.

**Unifying
Forces**

While we have spoken of New Englanders, Virginians, Pennsylvania Dutch, Scotch-Irish, Frontiersmen, and others, we shall now try to speak of Americans - - of the things which all had in common. But if "American" really means anything it must be true that not only did all these people have certain things in common but that they had also certain differences from other peoples of the world which made them a separate people. We shall now, therefore, take up not only the elements unifying the people in America but also those which distinguished them from other peoples elsewhere.

**National
Divergences**

INHERENT SIMILARITIES

In the first place language was a unifying feature. Nearly everywhere English was the general language. Some small communities still used Dutch, more still used

Language

German, but the common language was always English and for an overwhelming majority of the people it was the only language. The importance of language as a unifying force consists partly in how it is used. Language may, as a matter of fact, facilitate discord. The question is whether the possession of a common language meant that the population read and thought similar things. The bulk of the reading of the American people at that time consisted, in the first place, of religious literature, of which the backbone was the Bible, which was read from one end of the country to the other. Secondly, and most importantly, was the reading of political pamphlets. Such pamphlets were of a very high order, much superior in general tone to the political writing of today and requiring a higher political intelligence to understand them. These pamphlets from about 1760 onward had a very wide distribution from one end of the country to the other, and helped to diffuse both political intelligence and a common basis of political information.

In 1783 the American people had a considerable degree of racial unity. Nearly eighty-five per cent of the population was of English origin, and over six per cent Scottish.

Race

The next largest element was that of the Germans, which amounted to about five and one-half per cent, and the Dutch to two per cent. In every state the English were in the majority, and except in Pennsylvania, where the Germans were second, and New York, where the Dutch were second, the Scots followed the English.

INSTITUTIONAL SIMILARITIES

A very important factor of a different kind tending to unity was that the political divisions of the country did not correspond

**States Versus
Sections**

with the sectional divisions. Politically the country had been divided into colonies, which in 1776 became states. Of these states, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island may be con-

sidered as representing the New England element, and Virginia as representing the Virginian element. In all the other states there was a mixture of elements. New Hampshire had a frontier, so that young Daniel Webster, when he grew up, could to some degree exchange common experiences with even Andrew Jackson. South Carolina had a frontier, and its great leader in the next generation, John C. Calhoun, was to come from it. And so throughout. Had the country been divided politically as it was economically and socially, and had each political division represented a self-centered interest antagonistic to the others, it is a question whether they could have been brought to pull together. Very seldom has any American state continued for a long time to represent one type only and one undivided interest.

This distinction between the states and the sections modified or reduced the chances of conflict. One of the strongest forces tending to unity was the fact that the central institutions of all the states were strikingly similar, and not only similar to each other, but different in certain respects from the political institutions of any part of the world. In discussing these institutions the Americans not only felt sympathetic to each other but felt thrown upon each other for sympathy and understanding.

These state institutions cannot here be described in detail, but certain outstanding features must be mentioned. In every state in 1783 the government rested upon a written document called a constitution which was hedged round with the sanctity Americans attached to the idea of contract, for each of these constitutions in some way rested upon the consent of the people who were to be governed under it, and the government was to govern in accordance with its terms on penalty of being expelled by a just revolution. These constitutions were at that time unique.

The form of government described in these constitutions was not new but represented what had been practiced in the various colonies for anywhere from thirty to one hundred fifty years. While there were many minor divergences they were alike in several important particulars: First, there was in every state a legislature which, with the temporary exception of Pennsylvania, consisted of two

houses. One of these houses was a representative body representing fundamentally every separate individual community of which the state was composed. Fundamentally the Americans thought then, and seem still to think, that the thing to be represented is the community. This was already in 1783 embodied in the regulation that each representative must be a resident of his own district. This conception of representation was rather different from that which had developed in England. As a matter of fact, the different use of the same term led to some of the misunderstandings which produced the American Revolution, for English statesmen were quite sincere and represented the English understanding of the term when they said that Americans were represented in the English Parliament, whereas to Americans such an assertion was a distinct absurdity. On the other hand in contrast with today, Americans did not in 1783 consider it essential that every normal member of a community should have a right to vote. Voting was not a right so much as a privilege, but it was a privilege based not upon inheritance but upon certain well-defined rules which it was not difficult to meet. There probably was a wider opportunity to vote in America than in any other country at that time.

In the second place there was in each state an executive, and the different constitutions tried to make him as independent as possible of the legislature. In this they were reproducing the conditions of colonial times, where practically all governors were appointed by the King and therefore had an independent basis of authority from which the legislature could not dislodge them, though it could make life uncomfortable. Here again was a distinct difference from the actual working system in England, for the real executive there was the prime minister who was practically the choice of the Parliament and might be turned out of his office at any moment.

In the third place every constitution provided for a judiciary which was made as independent as possible of both legislature and executive. In the minds of the makers of these constitutions was the colonial condition which had been shared by all Americans and which gave to this judiciary a function peculiar and unique. In every colony there had been some document laying down the limits of government and corresponding to the

new constitutions. It frequently happened that legislature and governor would combine to pass a law or perform some act which might be considered contrary to this document.

In such cases there was always resort to judicial authority, ultimately to a judiciary which was absolutely and completely independent of both, that is to the English Privy Council. During the Colonial period hundreds of such cases were considered and Americans were fully accustomed to having the judiciary decide that some act of the legislature must be ignored as illegal, regardless of its desirability, on the ground that it was in conflict with the fundamental law of the land. This function of the judiciary was unique in the political experience of the time. That it was firmly in the minds of the framers of the state constitutions is evident, for the courts under the new constitutions straightway began to exercise it in reviewing the legislation of the states.

Independence and separation of the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary led the Americans to conceive that all government was properly divided into three branches, each of which should be independent of the other. The doctrine of the separation of powers was accepted from one end of America to the other; it was accepted at that time in no other part of the world.

SELECTIVE INFLUENCES

In addition to these distinctions in language, race, and institutions, the American people were somewhat divided from other

peoples and had a tendency to unity of characteristics among themselves owing to the very fact that they were a nation of immigrants.

Immigration is today so easy that the most casual impulse may send people away from their home country to a new land. But even now those who go are apt to be persons with a desire for new experiences or who for some reason have not fitted in at home and have ideas of their own as to the sort of community in which they would like to live. The very fact that of a particular nation some choose to stay at home and some choose to go abroad reveals a difference between them. To some extent, also, the people who choose to go abroad, although they may come

from different nations, resemble each other in this impulse to try the untried and to realize their ambition in the new rather than in the old. These conditions were very much more telling in the Colonial period than they are today, for migration was more difficult and those who did migrate were more conspicuously different than people who migrate today. The American people, therefore, in spite of differences in race and in local environment, did tend to understand each other and mutually welcomed new ideas, inventions, and conditions of the age to a greater extent than the people left behind in Europe.

Among the immigrants who came to America there was a great difference in influence. Those who came first have very much more affected life and ideals in America today than those who came later. It is very true that "as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined." The first customs, whether social or political, are very apt to remain unchanged unless there is something in them which is obnoxious to later comers. The feudalism that the Dutch introduced on the Hudson River has disappeared because it was uncongenial. The institutions established in Virginia and New England have, on the whole, remained and developed because they were congenial. Many other forms might have proved satisfactory and American history might have taken many different turns. As Kipling says: "There are eight and forty ways of singing tribal lays, and every single one of them is right." Once established, however, and proving congenial, these institutions become an essential part of what we mean by Americanism.

Another thing that made a great difference in the relative weight of different immigrants was whether they came over as individuals or as communities. An individual in a strange land may exert a great influence, but he cannot establish a civilization. In order to give a cultural atmosphere it is necessary to have a community practically complete, with its good and bad, its leaders and followers, its minister, schoolmaster, cobbler, and housewives. Such immigrants therefore as came over in groups constituted seeds of culture which, transplanted on American soil, developed somewhat differently from what they left at home, but flourished and came to be known as characteristically American.

Later, crowds of individuals settling in such communities found it increasingly difficult to establish different communities; for the brightest and strongest of their youth were tempted to excel in the established community culture that they saw about them, rather than toilsomely to build up the culture of their fathers which they had never seen in its full splendor. Consequently, the characteristics of American civilization had already in 1783 been to a very considerable extent formed, and with some striking exceptions the immigrants of later date have been absorbed into this, somewhat modifying it but not as yet changing it.

Another point to be kept in mind with regard to the relative influence of immigrants and the unity of the American people is

**Utopian
Ideal**

this: Many men of great minds, such as Plato and Sir Thomas Moore, had, in past centuries, devised ideal schemes for human happiness, which were known as Utopias. When America was discovered it seemed that at last there was a chance to realize such schemes on a virgin continent. From the beginning to the present day many of the ablest men and women who have come to America have had in their minds some Utopian conception which they have hoped to realize and which after arriving they have striven for, some with greater and some with less success. It might seem that the diversity of ideals thus brought to America would lead to strife, and to some degree this has been true. But to a large extent it has been a unifying influence, for all these men and women were united in one fundamental ideal, that is, the possibility of improving the human race and establishing some ideal, and in practice this has led to a fundamental sympathy. So much was this the case that even in the first generation in New England, while the different colonial leaders vigorously weeded their own communities of alien elements in order that they might realize their ideal, they were anxious to unite with other communities for common purposes, leaving each free to pursue its separate ideal. Thus the New England Confederation formed under the leadership of John Winthrop contained divergent communities cooperating for common ends. This principle of community independence and unity for certain purposes has made possible in America up to the present time the constant pursuit of different ideals with harmony of action and the unity of all in the defense of each.

THE COMMON LIFE

A further element of unity lay in the fact that all Americans were concerned in solving certain common problems. All the colonies had their Indian troubles; in every colony there was the problem of dividing unoccupied land among private owners who should cultivate it; in every colony there was a dearth of capital and a superabundance of opportunity to use it, and consequently the money problem was debated in every colonial legislature.

Common
Problems

VII.

THE PROBLEM OF UNION

INTRODUCTION

We have now discussed the American people of 1783, with reference to their general American characteristics, their sectional differences, and their political division into thirteen colonies. No people, however, can be rightly understood if studied entirely at home. All nations and peoples have relations beyond their borders which affect their lives and habits. This was notably true of the Americans, for few peoples have been so intimately connected throughout their history with those of other lands.

International Relations

The American people in 1783 were a nation of immigrants, many of them recent immigrants, immigrants also from many different lands, and they looked across the ocean with affection to the lands from which they had sprung, and in many cases to near relatives who still lived in them.

Immigration

There was a constant exchange of population between the different American colonies, and this created close family ties and relationships of property and of business.

Migration

The people of all the colonies had constant relationships, friendly or unfriendly, political and business, with the various Indian tribes.

Indians

Colonial products also were sold in many lands, and often were carried in American ships, manned by Americans, which brought back the products of other lands.

Trade

In addition, the American colonies had always been connected politically with European countries, Sweden, Holland, and England, and consequently, their political fortunes had followed the course of European politics. The peace of the American frontier, therefore, vibrated to the current of political events from one end to the other of the known world.

Political Connections

In order to understand what these relationships were in 1783 it is necessary to go back and see what had been happening during the preceding twenty-five years at least. No date is a satisfactory one, for historical development is continuous and not divided at fixed points; but a beginning may be made in 1760, for between that date and 1783 fundamental changes had taken place in the external relationship of the Americans which gave a basis for their relations to each other and their position in the world in 1783.

**Changes
1760 to 1783**

THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Politically, the colonies were all parts of the British Empire. They were not in any way more closely united by institutions with each other than they were with England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, India, Jamaica, Nova Scotia, or Canada. They were all parts of a great whole. Actually, as we have seen, by their characteristics they were united among themselves and somewhat divided against all the rest of the world, including the rest of the Empire. From about 1760 the great problem in America was whether the central pull of the Empire or the separating influences of American life would be stronger. In order to understand these years it is necessary to consider for a moment just what the British Empire meant to the colonies in 1760.

When all the colonies were founded, with the exception of Georgia, their unity with each other and with the rest of the Empire was centered in the person of the King. Not inappropriately did Charles II describe himself as "King of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Virginia," etc.

**Personal
Union**

It was, however, a very different thing, in 1630 from what it was in 1760, to be united through the person of the King. At the earlier date the King was the real administrative center of government and actually exercised the greater portion of governmental authority. Doubtless had the King's position remained dominant, this relationship would have proved very unsatisfactory to the colonies. But as the King's authority grew less, it became more and more to their liking until, in 1760 and later, we find the colonies insisting that the only fundamental bond of unity was in the person of the King.

The English attitude on the subject, however, had become very different. Between 1640 and 1688 a great struggle was waged

Parliamentary Union between the supporters of the royal prerogative and the supporters of Parliamentary authority.

Like most contests among level-headed people, neither side was completely victorious, but the practical victory lay with Parliament. Parliament having thus secured the victory over the King in England, naturally supposed that it inherited his position with regard to the colonies and from time to time asserted such authority, being in most cases opposed by colonial opinion which asserted that the British Parliament was the Parliament of Great Britain only, and, except for a certain dignity and precedence, was on a parity with the legislatures of Massachusetts, Virginia, and the other colonies.

EXTENT OF AUTHORITY IN 1760

The authority of the Empire, whether exercised by King or Parliament, was in 1760 too little. It was perhaps greater than has sometimes been realized, but at any rate it did not serve the purposes which a central authority should have served. This was very generally recognized by the thinking men, both of the colonies and of England, and really was the major subject of political interest and intellectual endeavor for that generation.

These thinkers on imperialism all differed among themselves, but they may be divided into two groups. At the head of one

Unity by Cooperation was William Pitt, associated with Edmund Burke and with Benjamin Franklin. They

realized that the Empire was clumsy, that it was badly defended, that there should be more effective control in American and Indian affairs, a better land policy, and in general that there were many things which could be done by cooperation which could be less well done if left to individual colonies, that would be badly muddled if done by different authorities working without harmony. They considered the problem of introducing American representatives into Parliament, or in some other way securing a central authority which should have the confidence both of the English on the one side and of the Americans on the other, and which would deal fairly between them and the other portions of the Empire. They were, however, less concerned with organization than with results, and Pitt, as a consequence

of his success in uniting colonial efforts during the Seven Years' War with France, believed it could be done by harmonious cooperation without any extensive governmental changes.

The other group, at the head of which must be placed George III, with Grenville, Townshend, North, and others, were annoyed at the clumsy, disorganized condition of the Empire and thought that nothing could be accomplished until the organization had been changed.

**Unity by
Coercion**

They saw no way of changing it save by centralizing authority in England and breaking down the barriers of colonial authority.

This latter group came into power in 1763 and remained in power for most of the time until American independence had

**Charter
Rights**

been secured. They tried many different schemes from which they receded, but the really crucial test came when they altered the provisions of government contained in the Massachusetts charter. The Americans regarded this and the other charters secured from England as being contracts. As has been seen, they gave a peculiar sanctity to the idea of contract; they believed that contracts could not be changed except by mutual agreement, and that if one party to a contract broke it the other was released from all its obligations. The law of Parliament altering the Massachusetts constitution was obnoxious to the Americans because they denied the authority of Parliament over America and they equally denied the power of the King to alter a charter which he had once granted.

The organization of the Empire, then, involved mutual misunderstandings as to where authority really lay, and these misunderstandings became more acute when the circumstances of the time made it necessary to strengthen the bonds of Empire if it was to be beneficial to either party.

VIII.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE
DISSOLUTION OF THE EMPIRE

The colonies on the Atlantic coast which became the United States of America occupied one of the footholds from which advance could be made across the American continent. The other great footholds, the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, were occupied by the French. Throughout colonial history the rivalry between these different colonial groups had been keen and from time to time had led to hostilities.

At first the opponents, widely separated by hundreds of miles of unknown forest and wilderness, had been put into a position of hostility with each other more by the rivalry
**Struggle for
the Continent** of their respective mother countries than by the conflict of their own interests. This was true throughout the seventeenth century, and it continued to be the major cause of hostility during the first part of the eighteenth. Up to 1688 clashes and conflicts were sporadic and more or less accidental. In 1688 there began that great series of wars between England and France which ended only in the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. The first of these wars, from 1688 to 1697, is known in American history as King William's War; the next, from 1702 to 1715, as Queen Anne's War; the third, from 1744 to 1748, as King George's War; and the last during the Colonial period, from 1756 to 1763, as the Seven Years' War.

Throughout this period the French and English colonies remained far distant from each other, approaching only on the coast between Maine and Acadia which is now New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The forests between, however, were inhabited by Indian tribes and through these tribes the effects of war, the tomahawk and the midnight raid, were communicated as electric current over a live wire.

The Indians were generally more favorable to the French than to the English. This was in part due to the greater tact shown by the French in dealing with them and to the
**Indian
Hostility** willingness of the French to intermarry with them. It was in the long run, however, still more due to the fact that the advancing American settlement of

pioneer farmers hewing down the wilderness, driving away the game and replacing the forest by civilization, interfered more with their wild life than did the French whose settlements advanced but slowly and whose main interest in Indians was to encourage them to catch fur-bearing animals and to bring their trade to Montreal. Hence while the Indians were divided and while some tribes, like those of the Iroquois in central New York, showed great skill in diplomacy in setting off one nation against the other, the weight of the Indian power was generally on the side of the French.

Each one of these colonial wars was, in fact, but a segment of a great world-wide conflict. America was but one of many fronts, and when peace was made the condition on every front had to be considered. Hence it often happened that the American colonies, having put forth some great exertion and won some local success, were obliged at the conclusion of hostilities to return their conquests to their opponents because of conditions elsewhere. The most striking instance of this occurred in 1748. The colonies of the north had made a very great effort and captured the Canadian seaport of Louisburg on the island of Cape Breton from which the French privateers had distressed American commerce. In 1748 by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Louisburg was returned to France to become again in the next war a nest for troublesome privateers. Many colonies began to feel that their connection with the far-flung British Empire was a disadvantage, a sentiment expressed somewhat later by John Adams in the terms that America had long enough been the "football of Europe." The advantages of the connection were, however, too great to sacrifice; and, if advantages were sometimes sacrificed owing to European conditions, the Empire was a necessary bulwark of defense, and only by its support could the colonies hope to gain that supremacy over the whole middle of the North American continent to which their ambitious minds already aspired.

The Seven Years' War differed from those preceding it in that its origin lay in America, and that England and France were drawn in after the conflict had started. It was in 1754, in fact, that the first conflicts took place round what is now Pittsburg, and as Voltaire said, "a torch was lighted in the forests of America which put

**World
Wars**

**Seven
Years' War**

all Europe into conflagration". The different groups of colonies by that time came into actual conflict with each other. Men like Benjamin Franklin and George Washington were anxious to found colonies in the valley of the Ohio. The French realized that if their colonies on the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi were to become the basis for a great empire, the Ohio valley was a necessary point of connection. Out of this conflict, each nation asserting on many grounds what it considered just claims to the region, arose the greatest American war which had yet taken place.

Under the leadership of William Pitt the resources of the Empire, both in America and elsewhere, were centralized as never

**Peace
of 1763**

before. From one end of the world to the other the British Empire was successful, and its victories were consolidated by the peace of 1763

which, unlike previous agreements, was satisfactory to the American colonies. The net result of this peace was that Canada and all French possessions east of the Mississippi River except a little area round New Orleans became British, and everything to the west became Spanish. The French were for the moment eliminated from America except for some islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the West Indies. This enormously simplified American geography and was fundamentally important because it removed from the American colonies the danger of French attacks in the rear.

It was just at this moment, when the colonies were relieved from danger, that the new proposals for the organization of the

**Release from
French Menace**

Empire were made. At no moment in American history could such proposals have seemed to

the mass of Americans so unnecessary; at no moment had the Americans been so free to resist them. If the movement for consolidation had fallen into the hands of Pitt and his broad-minded associates, and had been based on the securing of the general welfare by cooperative action on subjects of general importance, the idea might have carried the colonists with them. As it was, the direction of policy was in the hands of George III, and emphasis was placed upon the necessity of restriction and the red tape of administration. Friction, therefore, became greater at a moment when the bonds of union seemed less necessary than ever before.

It soon developed, moreover, that while Canada had become

British the natural rivalry between its settlers and those of the earlier English colonies had not disappeared. The Quebec Act Canadians were not accustomed to representative government and accepted with docility the control which the British Empire exerted over them. British administrative officers found them easier to deal with than the self-governing colonists to the south, and therefore tended to foster their interests by pursuing the old French policy with regard to the Indians and the fur trade. This became especially marked when, in 1774, the boundaries of the province of Quebec were extended south to the Ohio River and west to the Mississippi. It seemed relatively unimportant to many of the American colonists that the whole area should remain under the British flag if this territory, to the occupation of which they had been looking forward, were actually to be given to the French colonists and governed by French rather than English institutions.

It is not possible here to take up all the causes of the American Revolution, nor to follow in detail the course of events and the successive misunderstandings that led up to the final break. The major causes have already been given: first, the fact that there had developed in America a people kindred to the British but nevertheless self-consciously different in certain respects, their institutions based upon those of England but, since 1660 following a different course of development; second, that there were certain common problems which required the united action of all the American colonies, and that the British Empire did not prove able to evolve a central organization which had the confidence of the Americans; and third, that the withdrawal of the French menace left the colonies free to act while the absorption of Canada by Great Britain made that country to some extent the successor of France as the great enemy to be overcome if the people of the coast colonies were triumphantly to absorb the continent.

After a dozen years of political conflict, with regret on the part of most of the Americans, with violent opposition by a large minority, but with a stern sense of determination, on July 4, 1776 a congress in which were represented the continental group of colonies south of Canada declared themselves independent of Great Britain and prepared to maintain that independence.

The world was so closely linked together that for a hundred years practically no contest had started anywhere without becom-

**French
Alliance**

ing in the end a world conflict. The statesmen of all the nations of Europe, therefore, had followed the course of events in America with nervous interest. Some, particularly in France, devoted to the liberal ideas which were developing in the eighteenth century, welcomed the movement as a great step toward human freedom. The responsible statesmen for the most part asked how it would affect them. Here also the greatest interest was felt in France, the great rival of England, defeated in the last war, stripped of her American colonies, and anxious to regain her prestige and re-establish a colonial empire.

French opinion regarded the trade of the American colonies as the chief source of British wealth and strength. If this commerce could be subtracted from Great Britain, they thought that they might fight her at least on even terms. If it could be added to France, the balance would certainly turn to her favor. There was every motive, therefore, for France to aid the American colonies, except the motive of internal welfare which men like Turgot said called for a period of peace and recuperation. The sentiments favorable to America were skillfully united and inflamed by the superb diplomacy of Benjamin Franklin. When at length the French government became convinced that the Americans really were fighting for independence and not for a successful compromise, and that they had sufficient strength to occupy a considerable portion of England's forces, it consented in 1778 to recognize our independence and allied France with us in the contest.

With France, Holland and Spain were brought into the war, and these united forces were sufficient to compel Great Britain to ask for peace in 1783.

In the negotiations the United States was the ally of France, and France was also the ally of Spain, with whom we had no regular relationship. Between Spain and the United States, since in 1763 the former had come to occupy New Orleans, there was a natural rivalry for the control of the Mississippi Valley. France was not primarily interested in which was successful, but strove to bring both to agreement. The arguments of France used for this purpose combined with other episodes to convince John Adams and John Jay, who had been joined with Franklin to conduct the peace negotiations, that France was hostile to the United States.

**Treaty
of 1783**

It is probable that France did not wish the United States to become too powerful, but there can be little doubt of her friendly anxiety to secure what she would consider good terms for us. Nevertheless, Jay and Adams negotiated separately with Great Britain. Lord Shelbourne, the British prime minister, recognizing that independence must be acknowledged but still hoping to prevent that transfer of American friendship and commerce to France which France expected to be her reward for interference, agreed to a treaty with the United States by which we secured from Great Britain practically all the spoils of the war which had been jointly waged against her.

This treaty gave independence to all the British colonies that had revolted, and gave them as room to grow in about twice as much territory as that which they already occupied.

This treaty marks the dissolution of the British Empire as it had existed. John Adams was probably right in calling it a treaty for the division of an empire and its assets. From this time each of the parts, the larger one consisting of Great Britain and her other colonies, the smaller of the thirteen American colonies, was to have its separate interests and history.

Dissolution of the Empire

Most of the problems, however, which had previously existed still remained. Both parts still had problems which could not be solved without a central powerful administration. From that day to this the British statesmen have exercised themselves with the imperial problem, and their historians agree that they profited by the lessons learned in dealing with America and that the subsequent increase in cohesion and strength of their empire has been in part due to the American Revolution.

The Empire

The American statesmen, who had for fifteen years been struggling with the problem of union under the British flag, were now confronted with the problem of union under the American flag. The Indian problem still remained; the conquest of the continent was still a great incentive; and while now independent, it was obvious that they had important relationships with the rest of the world, and that both Great Britain and France still considered them a factor in their mutual struggle, and that effort would still be required to prevent America from remaining the "football of Europe."

The American Union

IX.

THE FOUNDATION OF AUTHORITY IN AMERICA

The dissolution of the Empire left the American portion without any recognized authority of government. We who are accustomed to living under an authority so long established and passed down by such regular routine forms are apt to forget the difference between authority and power. It is by authority that one policeman controls a large crowd; that the court orders citizens to appear before it; that the government collects its taxes. Authority which has been long established and which is even reasonably satisfactory needs little real power behind it.

What Is Authority?

When a revolution occurs one finds at once that it is necessary to increase the numbers of the police and of the standing army. A new government being without recognized authority needs power to enforce its decisions, and even then its decisions are very often resisted by those who can see no reason why its will and not theirs should prevail. The loss of authority is the cost which people must pay for revolution. Sometimes it is worth the cost, but it never fails to be expensive.

Cost of Revolution

In America, authority had always run back to the King's government in England, and the King's government in England existed on the basis of an uninterrupted continuity of authority running back, with one partial break, to the times of Hengist and Horsa, and even to the forests of Germany. Every village constable and every county sheriff wielded the authority of the King and was recognized as his representative. If the people of America were to escape anarchy when this line was broken, it was necessary to re-establish authority, and the primary problem which they had to solve was how it should be done and on what basis it should rest.

Colonial Authority

In this emergency the American people relied chiefly upon their leaders, and their leaders in turn relied upon that inbred political

common sense which more than a thousand years of English history had developed in them. But it was necessary to have some definite conception upon which to work, and this conception they found already worked out for them in the philosophy of John Locke.

John Locke was a young man during the great English Civil War and when that war was over he devoted his mind to working out the political conceptions which the war developed. At the same time another philosopher, Hobbes, was engaged at the same work, but in general it may be said that Hobbes developed the philosophy of the King's party, Locke that of the Puritans.

It was necessary for Locke to find a justification for revolution and to place some limits upon what otherwise would be arbitrary government. He therefore imagined man in a state of nature. He conceived then that man had a social nature and desired to live, not alone, but with groups of his fellows. In order to do this it was necessary to give up some of his natural liberty and to give to someone authority to perform the common purposes of the group. He therefore imagined that the men of that time came together and agreed, by contract, that they would allow some of them to govern subject to conditions among which were, that they should recognize liberties of the individual, and that they should make their government beneficent. Thus he found the basis of authority to be the consent of the governed expressed in the form of a contract. It was an easy course of logic to reason that if those in authority failed to maintain the terms of the contract, the mass of the people were free to consider the contract broken and to proceed again by their consent to form a new contract giving authority to different persons and laying down such other conditions as should seem desirable at the time.

This philosophy readily appealed to the American people because it was in origin but a mere codification of the views of the Puritan party to which most of the American immigrants had belonged and from which they had drawn their ideas.

Provided with a philosophy, there was still necessary a method.

How was the consent of the people to be obtained? This would be easy enough in a small community where all the people could come together. How could it be obtained in a large country over which the population was thinly dispersed?

Here recourse was had to the precedent of the one break in the continuity of English authority, when in 1688 James II abandoned his throne and fled to France, dropping the great seal, the visible representation of authority, into the Thames as he went. Without the seal it was impossible to summon Parliament, and the problem arose as to how to secure the consent of the people of England to the authority of William and Mary whom the majority desired.

On this occasion it was decided to have persons come together, either by privileged right, as in the case of the lords, or by election, as in the case of the representatives, using the machinery of Parliament, but to be called a Convention. When this Convention came together it resembled Parliament in form, but it differed from Parliament in that it had no formal sanction for its being and, what was perhaps more important, no limits to its authority. It was the people of England incarnate, and as such it proceeded to re-establish order in England and to lay down certain fundamental rules which have since been obeyed.

It is very important for the student of American history to grasp this idea of a Convention. All legislative bodies with which we are familiar come together to perform **"Conventions"** set functions, and with fixed limits to their authority. If they act beyond these they may exercise power, but they have no authority for doing so and may at any moment be called to account. A Convention is a body which for the time being represents the whole people and all their power. It is the essence of a Convention that it is not intended to be permanent, but to lay down rules governing the legislative bodies which will meet periodically in the future.

With this precedent in mind the colonies proceeded. Generally committees of safety, emergency bodies supported only by popular opinion, took charge of affairs. These bodies called for elections through the colonies on the same basis as that on which the colonial legislatures had been elected. When they came together they called

**The First
Conventions**

themselves Provincial Congresses and Conventions, and were without any definite standing except in the fact that they represented the will of the people.

These Conventions proceeded to lay the foundations for future authority in accordance with the philosophical principles of Locke. In Rhode Island and Connecticut they slightly altered the old royal charters under which government had been conducted thus changing them into constitutions. These then became the written contracts resting on the consent of the people and furnishing the basis for the authority of the officials elected under them.

**Old Charters
Endorsed**

The other colonies were not so well provided, and in them the Provincial Congresses began to draw up new constitutions which would serve the same purpose.

**New
Constitutions**

The people of Delaware felt that an emergency body called in this way, primarily for the purposes of military defense, was not the proper body to draw up a constitution to govern the future, and consequently ordered new elections to be held for the express purpose of choosing men to draw up such a fundamental constitution. This new Convention in Delaware did its work, but it did other work also and many people feared that where the same body drew up what was intended to be a fundamental law and many other laws which were obviously of temporary character, the first would not enjoy any peculiar sanctity and authority would be weak.

**Special
Conventions**

Massachusetts felt this so keenly that in 1778 they chose members for a Convention with the understanding that their sole purpose was that of drawing up a constitution, and this became the first really and exclusively Constitutional Convention in America.

**Constitutional
Convention**

When this Massachusetts constitution was drawn up a further point was made. It was argued that the consent of the people to it was too indirect. They had merely chosen men and these men had drawn up a constitution. No popular assent to their work had been secured. It was therefore provided that the constitution drawn up by the Constitutional Convention should be submitted to popular vote.

**Popular
Referendum**

Thus by 1780 authority had been re-established in all the thirteen colonies that had revolted, and also in what is now the state of Vermont where the people who had not previously been a separate political unit had constituted themselves into one and drawn up a constitution of their own. In all cases this authority rested upon the consent of the people, variously expressed, and in all cases it took the form of a contract or a written constitution which described what persons should exercise the powers of the people as a whole, how they should be chosen, for what terms they should serve, what powers they should exercise, and what rights were reserved to individuals. In all cases the failure of the persons so chosen, whether governor or legislators, to remain within the limits of the powers granted to them would render them liable to impeachment. Everywhere it was recognized that acts which they performed beyond the powers granted to them would be unconstitutional and void, and everywhere there was the feeling that should these legal restraints upon their ambitions fail, the people would be justified in making a new revolution and proceeding again to establish a new contract and a new basis of authority. But nowhere in the United States except possibly in Rhode Island has such a revolution been found necessary, and in all the region indicated authority today still goes back to the will of the people expressed immediately after the break with England.

The actual form which these new constitutions provided showed little that was new. The colonies were not dissatisfied with their colonial governments; what they had feared was that the authority of these governments would be diminished by the increasing exercise of power by Parliament and the King. For the most part, then, these constitutions represent a codification of colonial practice.

Here and there we find innovations. Vermont and Pennsylvania, for instance, looking back to the Roman practice, provided for public censors who should from time to time survey the state and recommend remedial measures. In Pennsylvania, also, the first constitution provided for a legislature with one house instead of two. These innovations however rapidly disappeared, and the forms of government with which all were familiar continued to operate

**The First
Constitution**

**Form of
Government**

**Continuity
of Practice**

with minor changes and improvements and with slight variations from state to state. This continuity of form made it easier for the new authority to work. The basis had indeed changed, but its operation on the individual and the processes of the law remained as they were.

On the whole, no country has passed through a real revolution—which means an actual change in the basis of authority—with so little disturbance as that by which the American colonies were transformed into American states. It was not that there was no disturbance. Such changes never fail to produce them. But the disturbances were less than elsewhere, and the difference in the operation of government machinery between 1760 and 1785 was so little that no observant foreigner viewing the country at those two dates would have supposed that a revolution and not merely normal progress had occurred during the interval.

THE PROBLEM OF UNION IN AMERICA

When the people of the thirteen colonies were busy in establishing a new basis of government in each of the colonies they had no idea that each colony would become a separate and independent nation such as France, England, or Spain. From the beginning they expected to be associated among themselves in some definite way, and particularly that, as confronting the outside world, there should be a unity of the American states.

This idea of American unity was indeed not a new one. It had been suggested by many thinkers both American and English even while the colonies were a part of the Empire, that it would be advantageous to have the different colonies united into some one or more administrative units which would make more effective the handling of common problems, such as that of the Indians, or the raising of troops during time of war. Such an idea was novel at the time, but has since been carried out in the case of the union of the various Canadian provinces into the Dominion of Canada, of those of Australia into the Commonwealth of Australia, and those of South Africa into the South African Union.

The British government had several times taken first steps toward such a consummation; as for instance, when in 1686 Colonel Andros was appointed governor of all the New England colonies and of New York. It was perhaps more important that the Americans themselves had been interested in the matter and had from time to time in part accomplished it. In 1643 for instance most of the colonies of New England united in the New England Confederation which lasted for forty years; and when in 1754 at the opening of the Seven Years' War, the King's government called a conference to provide for union for more effective military purposes, the most important member of the congress which met at Albany was a colonial, Benjamin Franklin.

**British
Efforts****American
Efforts**

Not only was the idea of an American union familiar, but the Americans were also acquainted with some of the problems which such a union would involve and had a familiarity with the workings of federation. In fact the idea of federation was from the beginning one of the most important developments of American thought and has become one of the greatest contributions which Americans have made to political theory and practice.

**Idea of
Federation**

The idea grew naturally from the fact that so many groups came over to America intent upon realizing here some Utopian ideal which required for its perfection a great deal of local independence and a strong local government. These groups were, however, in most cases so small and feeble that they could not stand alone, and it was natural therefore that even in the first generation they developed methods by which their common defense and general welfare were provided for, while leaving the several communities free from interference by the central government.

The government of the river towns of Connecticut was an illustration of this practice, each town retaining practical independence but all uniting for certain definite common purposes. Still more striking was the union of the different colonies which went to make up Rhode Island, for the differences between them were very great indeed, but the pressure of powerful neighbors forced them into a unity which ultimately became a single colony and later a single state.

**Colonial
Beginnings**

It was on the basis of such experience that the New England Confederation was founded, and its history made Americans familiar with the kind of problems that confederation or federation brings about and also with some of the advantages that it gives.

When in 1688 the massacre at Schenectady opened up for America the great series of wars with the French and Indians, Jacob Leisler who was then acting as governor of New York invited representatives from various other colonies to meet with him. Some actually came, and a cooperative expedition planned against the French in Canada was actually set in motion, although it failed to accomplish its result.

It was natural, therefore, that when in 1765 all colonies were equally incensed at the centralizing policy of George III, and particularly at the passage of the Stamp Act, the various legislatures should send delegates to meet together to consult for the common defense against a common grievance.

The same thing was done in 1774 after the passage of the Boston Port Bill and the Quebec Act; and from that time to this there has always been in America a central organization serving the common purposes of all the different political units into which the country has been divided.

The body which met in 1774 was called the Continental Congress—"Continental" because it did not contain representatives from the British West India colonies. Even then the term was a little deceptive, for not all the continental colonies were represented, Nova Scotia being the notable exception.

The term "Congress" is here very significant. We in America apply it to our most important representative body. The technical meaning of the word however is "a meeting of diplomats representing independent sovereign states." And the term was intentionally and properly applied when the delegates met in 1774: that is, the delegates represented colonies which were independent of each other although they had not yet asserted their independence from Great Britain. It was a diplomatic body which met for the diplomatic purpose of urging a joint case against Great Britain.

Already in 1775 however the result of their joint action was war, and in 1776 actual independence from Great Britain was declared. This necessitated action on the part of Congress which exceeded in its scope that of any body of diplomats. They proceeded to raise, not a cooperative army but a continental army, and to provide for its support by continental measures. In fact, the delegates from various provinces began to bring to their meeting at Philadelphia instructions from their home legislatures giving them powers far in excess of those which any diplomat would ever exercise, and Congress proceeded to exercise such power even in the case of colonies which did not definitely grant it.

Growth of Congress

Already in 1776, then, there existed in America a central government which was exercising power over a wide field, which drew its authority from the instructions given to its representatives, but which actually exercised an authority regardless in some degree of these instructions, really knowing that the mass of the people wished them to do so and finding in this tacit consent the basis for what they did.

The Americans however are a legal-minded people, and they had no intention of leaving the exercise of these important centralizing powers in the hands of a body which assumed power to which there were no fixed limits.

Plan of Union

As soon as they decided to become independent of Great Britain they appointed a committee to draw up articles of confederation under which a government should be formed which would supply the lack left by the withdrawal of imperial power.

This committee worked at its problem for eighteen months. There were many who felt that in forming a government of their own which they could control they should give to it more powers than the Empire had ever exercised in order that it might better perform the common problems. There was in fact no doubt that one of the chief defects of the imperial relationship was that the power of the central government was not sufficiently exercised.

On the other hand, another group felt keenly the desire for local independence. If successful in throwing off the power of Great Britain, why create a new government to interfere with them, a government in which, even while they were to be represented, they would be but a minority?

The second party on the whole won out, and the Articles of Confederation which they presented in 1778 and which were accepted by Congress and presented to the states for adoption presented a triumph for the small government party rather than a compromise between the two groups.

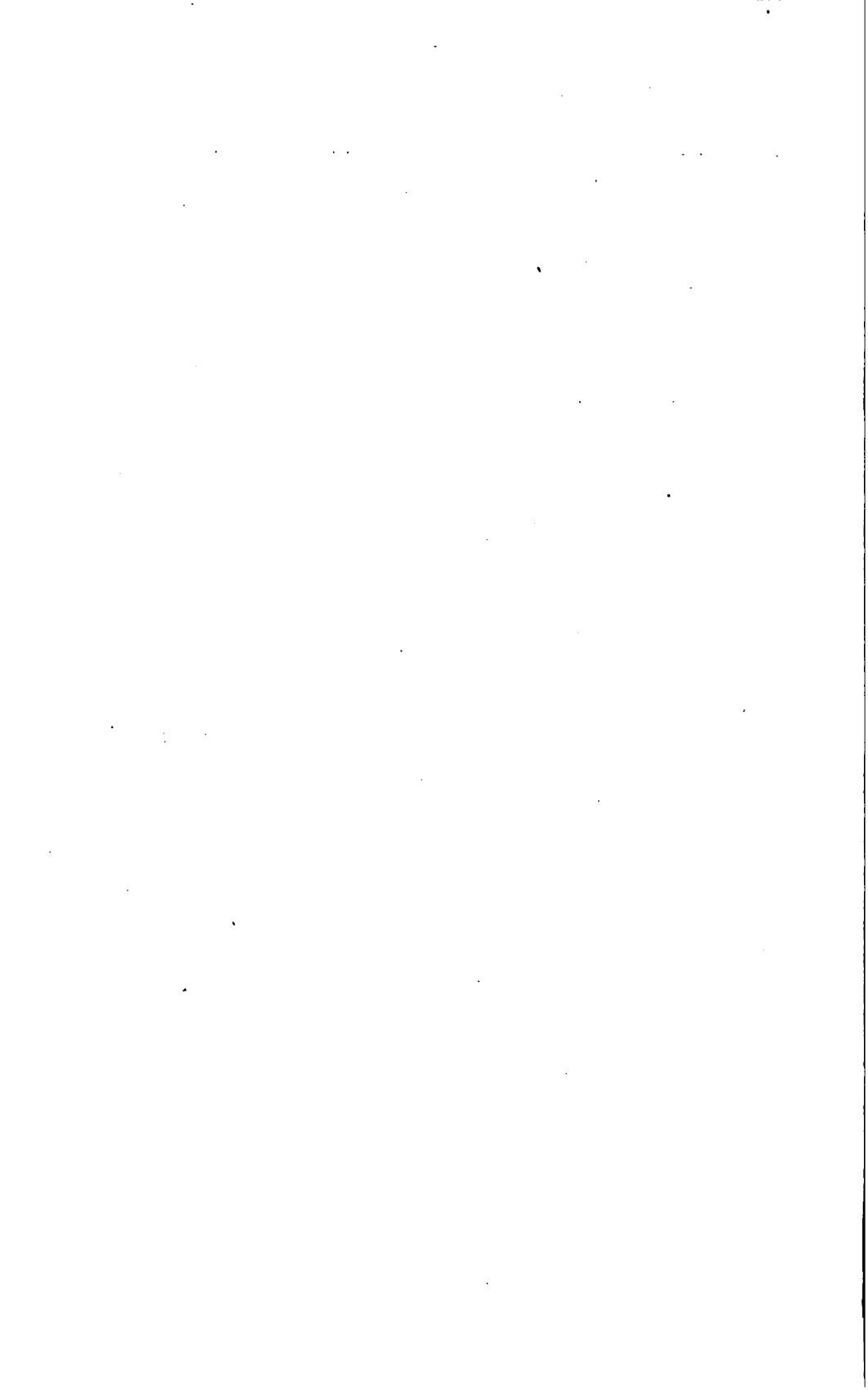
The central government under the Articles was to rest upon the consent of the several states. It was not to be independently sanctioned. The basis of authority in the United States was the consent of the people of each state to their own constitution, and the central government rested on the consent of the various state governments. Without the consent of every one of these, it could not be changed.

The method of government thus devised resembled more closely the diplomatic assemblages of the Continental Congresses than it did the state institutions which were so successfully working. There was no executive, and, with certain small exceptions, no judiciary. All power was in the hands of the legislative body which consisted of one house instead of two. This was still in title Congress, and in fact more resembled an assemblage of diplomats than a body of true representatives, for its members were chosen for one year only, were paid by their states, and could be recalled by their state legislatures, which meant also that they could be instructed by them how to vote. In every case of division moreover each state had one vote, and few measures of importance could be carried without the consent of at least nine of the thirteen states.

Furthermore the powers which were placed in the hands of this Congress were very small. They were confined, for the most part, to the handling of the foreign relationships of the states. But even here Congress was not given a free hand, for each state had full control of its commercial policy, making its own tariff system; and all that Congress could do by treaty was to provide that the states should not discriminate by levying a heavier duty against the goods of one nation than it put upon those of another. Even Indian affairs were left for the most part to the states, and the revenue of the new government was to be obtained by assessing levies upon the several states, which one might easily have foreseen would be generally considered unjust and would lead in many cases to refusal to pay.

In providing for a general government uniting them all together, the colonies did a great deal to meet the difficulties which arose from their separation from the Empire. They accomplished a political feat of no small difficulty or importance. It is not surprising that they did not entirely succeed. They had a better preparation for it than any other people in the world at that time, but yet on such a scale as they planned it a government to control such an area and people of such differing characteristics and interests was so novel a task that success was probably not possible at once. It was only when by experience they had found where the difficulties lay, that they could be expected, with the utmost good-will, to lay foundations which would permanently endure. They had announced to the world and to themselves their intention to be a nation. They had taken the first step in organizing the government of that nation. The future would determine what further steps there were to be taken and would show whether they had the character and the wisdom to accomplish their purpose.

**Value of
Beginning**











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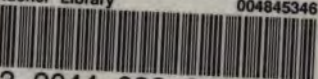
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